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THE APOSTLES' CREED

THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE



THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

THE APOSTLES' CREED AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

BY

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Authorized Translation from the German

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of Religious Knowledge"*



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THE NEW TESTAMENT

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THE author of this little volume was born at Dittmamsdorf, Saxony, Aug. 31, 1865. He received his education at the universities of Leipsic and Erlangen; taught in secondary schools at Annaberg and Dresden; became assistant university preacher at Leipsic in 1892, where he entered the faculty as privat-docent in 1894, becoming associate professor of the history of doctrine in 1899; in 1903 he went as full professor to the University of Vienna, whence he was called in 1905 to his present position as professor of doctrinal and practical theology in Griefswald. His studies and writings have been largely directed to the history of the Apostles' Creed, as is shown by the titles of his works frequently cited in the present

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volume. He has also written a biography of his colleague, the eminent Professor C. E. Luthardt, and monographs on the deity of Christ and the doctrine of justification.

The present work, for which his previous studies have so well equipped him, was occasioned by the very insistent attempts made by extreme "liberal theologians" of Germany to have the Creed omitted from ecclesiastical and ritual usage. The results which he reached are novel in one respect, in that instead of deriving the Creed from the New Testament, he regards it, in essence and partly in form, anterior to the earliest document contained in that body of writings, indeed in numerous cases controlling the form of expression therein.

While there is in the United States no such polemic need for a work like this as exists in Germany, the painstaking study and the very interesting issue to which the book comes will, it is hoped, justify the publication.

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I

Significance of the Theme

THE Apostles' Creed or Apostolic Symbol is known in all branches of the Evangelical Church because of its presence in the catechisms. Its division into three articles is the same in all, and the wording is also essentially identical. We may employ as the typical groundform the translation from the *textus receptus* as it appears in the Book of Common Prayer of the Protestant Episcopal Church.*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary: Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell, The third day

*TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. The author uses the form in Luther's Smaller Catechism as it is given in the symbolic books of the Lutheran Church. The wording differs from that adduced here only in the use of the word "Christian" for "Catholic" in the third article.

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he rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholic Church, The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body; And the Life everlasting. Amen.

This creed possesses deep ecclesiastical significance. At baptism it is employed as the expression of that faith which the child is to make its own or the adult acknowledges to be his. In corresponding fashion the candidates for confirmation take it upon their lips when they give affirmation to their baptism. So it comes about that in the instruction of baptized youth a chief part is the introduction of this creed and its impression upon the mind. Moreover, the congregation of adults brings in divine service this, its ground of belief, to audible expression and so gives outward form to its consciousness, either in the oral recitation of the "Apostolicum" or in singing a

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hymn which embodies its contents. Finally, practically everywhere the symbol forms an essential part of the creedal obligations which are laid upon the servant of the Lord.

For these reasons it is not surprising that, on the other hand, the Apostles' Creed is especially assailed by those who exercise the functions of criticism upon the historically transmitted form of ecclesiastical faith. People who can no longer recognize it as an expression of their own faith or of the modern spirit of religion would like to eliminate it from the baptismal service, from the rites of confirmation, and from divine service. Indeed, their attack upon catechetical instruction must be recognized as being essentially a war upon this creed. Even tho they raise no objection to the two other essentials, the Decalog and the Lord's Prayer, they revolt against the Apostolicum; indeed against this is the battle arrayed, only the fact is not often clearly seen or expressly avowed.

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The importance of the question which is here broached is seen to be enhanced when we recall that the Apostles' Creed is not the exclusive possession or a new creation of the Evangelical* Church. Rather we maintain that in the Sunday liturgy we employ it "in common with the whole of Christendom on earth." Yet this last statement is not exactly and literally true. For the Orthodox-Anatolian Church, or, as we are accustomed to call it, the Greek Catholic (Eastern) Church, uses instead of the Apostles' Creed at baptism and in the liturgy the so-called Nicene or Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. According to one tradition, which can not be very far from the truth, this symbol was set forth by the so-called ecumenical council held at Constantinople in 381 A. D.† As the second ecumenical creed (next to the 'Apostles'), this is recognized also

*TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. "Evangelical" is used by the Germans in nearly the same sense as we use "Protestant."

†Cf. the author's work on the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, Leipsic, 1898.

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in the Western Church, tho to be sure, with the celebrated addition of the *filioque* in the third article. It is employed by the Roman Church in the mass as an original document and was retained by Luther and the Lutheran Church, and in many places it is still in use in the chief Sunday service, at least on high feast days. Its wording is as follows :

I believe in one God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things
visible and invisible :

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made ; Who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man ; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered, and was buried ; And the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures ; and ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right

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hand of the Father; And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son,* Who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets: and I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church; I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins; And I look for the Resurrection of the dead; And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

If this formulation be compared with the Apostles' Creed, it appears at once that they differ in that the Nicene Creed is richer in its dogmatic statements, especially those which relate to the deity of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Ghost. It is evident to all who are acquainted with the history of dogma that these larger formulations arose in the third and fourth centuries. But if there be abstracted from the Ni-

*A western insertion.

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cene Creed that which is common to it and the Apostles', the harmony of the two becomes clear in the entire course and construction, both in the chief contents and surprizingly also in the individual statements. Indeed we make the assertion that the Apostles' Creed is fully contained in the Nicene. In this sense we may also avow that in the Apostles' Creed we acknowledge our faith in harmony with the entire Church on earth. This may be exprest in another way—the apostolic symbol constitutes a bond of union between the common possession of Protestantism and Catholicism.

There may be in this food for exultation; it may also give cause for doubts. Granted that we have this creed in common with Catholicism, it may be that it has not the ring of Evangelical Christendom. Indeed the suspicion may lie very close that it has been taken over as a remainder of Catholic heritage—possibly in a spirit of piety, perhaps merely from external causes—and that

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now, in a more complete carrying out of the fundamental principles of the Reformation, it is to be swept away on the ground that it is Romish leaven. Such thoughts as these are not merely possible, they are more than ever outspoken declarations and are made the basis of attempts looking to the retirement of this creed. How shall we reach—how especially may the educated Christian reach—an independent decision, a well-based standing in the situation which is now presented? As Evangelicals we are not in a position simply to leave it to the authority of the Church. The newer discussions have given rise to the impression that the modern Evangelical Christian is delivered over helpless to another kind of authority, viz., that of historical science. This would instruct him, so it appears, regarding the ancestry and origin of the Apostles' Creed, and in accordance with this he is to take his stand. Herein, so certainly as we assume and demand of the cultured Christian interest in these historical

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questions just as little may the decision rest there in respect to this creed. For in scientific matters he remains a layman; and in regard to ultimate problems there can be in the Evangelical Church no opposition between laymen who rest their belief upon authority and those who in matters that affect faith stand upon their own feet. Consequently it is not the lightest task of theological science, in regard to each distinctive problem, to point out the way by which one may attain independence in deciding that which pertains to religion.

Looking now to the 'Apostles' Creed, such a way is open. For in the Evangelical Church no creed has unconditioned authority; such authority as it has it borrows from Scripture, as the moon gets its light from the sun. But Scripture is accessible to every Christian, and as a whole is as certain as it is understandable. Holy Scripture is the Magna Charta for the freedom of our faith. Consequently in settling the relationship

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of the Evangelical Christian to the document under consideration, the deciding question is—How does the creed relate itself to the Bible, especially to the New Testament? Is it in entire or in only partial agreement, or in contradiction? Yet at the same time there are here set limits to agreement. If one puts the Bible aside, if one sees in the New Testament a construction of the “Catholic” Church and so a perversion of primitive Christianity, in short, if one conclusively denies the absoluteness of biblical revelation, that man must necessarily throw away the Apostles’ Creed. A discussion of this creed has sense and purpose only in case one holds to Holy Scripture, especially to the New Testament, as the original witness of the unsurpassable revelation of God. He who, remaining in the Evangelical Church, combats the creed while he in reality rejects the New Testament, helps not at all the settlement of the disagreement, because he simply obscures it.

We have next to show that our fundamental

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position in relation to the problem that lies before us is the same as that of the Reformers. Thus it will become apparent how our church came into possession of this confession.

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II

Reception of the Apostles' Creed through the Reformers and the Branching of the Problem

Like other Reformers before him and of his time, Luther received and took over from the medieval Catholic Church among many other documents also this creed. This is incontestable. Yet sufficient emphasis can not be laid upon the fact that when this is said nothing effectual and decisive has been spoken. For many another thing did Luther receive from his mother church only to reject it later and even to make war upon it. Why then did he continue to hold fast to this creed? The authority of the historical Church had for him nothing decisive, for the shattering of this authority was one of the levers of the Reformation. The idea that has at times been advanced that Luther acted as he did in this matter on the promptings of political policy can

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no longer be regarded as within reason. It is possible to suppose, however, that Luther held fast to the Apostles' Creed upon historical grounds, *viz.*, because it was traditionally held to be the production of the apostles. As a matter of fact the Catholic opponents of the Augsburg Confession attempted from this point of view to score upon the Evangelicals because of their retention of the Creed: they argued that according to the Evangelicals' principle of reference to the Scriptures the latter were under obligation to prove that the apostles really composed this symbol. Neither in this form nor in any other, however, was historical tradition decisive for Luther. He was indeed inclined to receive this creed as the work of the apostles.

But it was not out of recognition of what was (supposed to be) pure historical fact that the value of the Creed for him issued; the reverse was the case. He reached the idea of apostolicity on the ground that "it was constructed in so

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masterly and pure a fashion that the work could not have been done better; it is altogether reasonable to conclude that the apostles formulated it, since it is hardly possible that others than they could have reached such a result" (in his *Works*, second Erlangen edition, ix. 32). Calvin assumed a like position (*Institutes* II, 16, 18), but Lutheran orthodoxy positively denied the immediate apostolic origin of the creed. So it appears that the real Evangelical position with respect to this symbol does not depend upon the proof that the apostles were not the authors.

What is then the actual ground upon which Luther and the other Reformers retained the Apostles' Creed? Luther stated the reason when he said in his *Kirchenpostille*:

"We have neither made nor devised this confession, nor did the fathers who preceded us in time; rather, just as a bee gathers honey from many beautiful bright flowers, so this symbol is brought together out of the beloved books of prophets and apostles, that is to say, out of en-

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tire Holy Writ, for the advantage of children and single-hearted Christians. Consequently, we do well to name it the 'Apostles' Creed' or 'Symbol,' for it is so formulated that no one could have improved upon it in quality, brevity, and clarity. Hence in the Christian Church from high antiquity it has been held that it was either the production of the apostles or was brought together out of their writings or sermons by their best instructed disciples." (*Works*, ix. 29.)

Similarly, in the place already cited, Calvin remarks: "This is sure, that in (the Apostles' Creed) the entire history of our faith is set forth in brevity and order, while nothing is contained therein which is not sealed by veritable Scripture testimony." From this it appears that the reason for the Reformers' valuation of the Creed was its agreement with Scripture. And this statement is not to be taken as tho Luther explained the Creed according to Scripture and (as Kattebusch affirmed) interpreted it anew. Not from the symbol itself, not from its verbal form, did Luther assert its agreement with the Bible. He

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discovered not the faintest disharmony between Holy Writ and the symbol; consequently, he so enveloped himself in the Apostles' Creed (or, as he preferred to call it, "The Faith") that in his most peculiar and private religious needs he constantly drew religious strength from it into his own being. Consequently, while he did not create the Creed, he did in a manner recreate it; that is to say, he would have been under the necessity of formulating it had it not been ready to hand; but he had not such confidence in himself as to believe that the result would have been so masterly. Consequently, the most recent assumption must be regarded as from the beginning improbable, namely that Luther was not aware of a chasm which existed between this Creed and the faith of the Reformation, and that therein he was deceived. Is not Luther by such a hypothesis charged with a belief foreign to him? We shall have to examine the symbol from this point of view.

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Meanwhile, this dogmatic-religious method of putting the question, in which the content of the symbol is measured over against the content of Scripture, can not prove altogether satisfactory. The historical side of the case is not altogether without significance. Indeed, this was the way that Luther felt. For it appeared to him self-evident that as early as the apostolic age the Church had formed this confession. Not yet had this hypothesis been seriously assailed. But if now it should be indicated that the Church had not formulated this document until the period of catholicizing perversion, our joy in the Creed must suffer impairment; rather we could not avoid a feeling of anxiety lest the confession have shared in the perversion which went on in the Church, or lest it be indeed part of the fruit and results of the same. For this reason it becomes necessary to examine the Creed with a view to discovering its dogmatic contents as well as to search the

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history, when we deal with the question of the relations of the Creed to the New Testament. In considering the historical side, we may formulate the question thus: Is the existence of the Apostles' Creed in the Apostolic Church provable, or can such a condition be shown to be probable? In the end, to be sure, the answer to both questions necessarily intertwine. We begin with the historical investigation.

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III

The Method of the Historical Investigation

WE must first come to an understanding regarding the course and method which we are to pursue. We have our choice either to start from the New Testament and proceed downward until we come to the Creed; or to start with the Creed, having then to retrace our steps up and back till we reach New Testament times. Various scholars have blazed out the first course, (one of the latest being Alfred Seeberg,* with whom Reinhold Seeberg closely agrees), and with results that must prove significant if they are substantiated. In connection with his investigations concerning the catechism of primitive

**Der Katechismus der Urchristenheit*, 1903; *Das Evangelium Christi*, 1905; cf. *Die Taufe im Neuen Testament*, in *Biblische Zeit-und Streitfragen*, I. 10.

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Christianity, the first named thinks he can prove that primitive Christianity possess a "formula of belief" in the first years of its existence. Not that it was regarded as inviolately fixt in its wording, but that the relationship of its various statements were in the same condition as those of the Lord's Prayer or the formula of the Lord's Supper. The "formula of faith," as Paul and Luke set them forth in their writings, must, on this hypothesis, have been "very like" the following: The Living God, who created all things, sent his son Jesus Christ, who was born of David's seed, died according to the Scriptures for our sins and was buried, rose on the third day according to the Scriptures and appeared to Cephas and the Twelve, is seated at the right hand of God in heaven, wherefore all dominion, power, and might are subjected to him, and he shall come on the clouds of heaven with greater power and lordship. The Lucan formula differs essentially only by this addition at the end: "He

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will judge the quick and the dead;" and this last clause is included in the formula as set forth in the pastoral epistles and in 1 Peter. This affords a statement dealing essentially with the history of salvation, in a single article, concerned especially with Christology, except that at the beginning mention is made of God the Creator who had sent Christ. Concerning the rise of this formula, Seeberg remarks that tradition reports its issue from the manifestation of the risen Lord (*Katechismus*, pp. 206, 210). In reality its origin is to be placed "some years after the death of Christ between 30 and 35 A. D." in the circle of the apostles, and in such a way that the witness of Christ to himself before the council was welded into oneness with the appearance of the living Christ. "But this way of looking at it might, indeed must, lead to an inadequate exposition, as tho the revelation had the consequence that Jesus gave utterance to these definite words" (pp. 207-8). Paul, too, came to know this for-

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mula of belief after his miraculous conversion, regarding it as the words of Christ (pp. 200, 208, 190). It must also have connected itself in a singular manner with the revelation of Christ which he experienced (pp. 207-8), so that from that time on he included the complex of facts stated compactly in the formula of belief in what he variously spoke of as "his gospel" or "Christ's gospel" (p. 200). As to the significance of the Creed, Seeberg judges that it both bound together in fixt form the specifically Christian doctrine used in preparation for baptism alongside of the ethical teachings taken over from Judaism, and served as the norm for missionary preaching in the apostolic age, equally for Paul and the primitive apostles (pp. 55-6).

Alongside of the (development of the) formula of belief, A. Seeberg sees a second line of unfolding for the early history of the Apostles' Creed—the trinitarian scheme. This also evolved out of the baptism of catechumens insofar that along-

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side of baptism with water stood baptism with the Spirit. To baptism with water there belonged "a formula in which God and His Son Jesus Christ were named;" so in the baptism with the Spirit, which followed immediately after with the laying on of hands, the Holy Spirit was named. So the formula in three articles came into use at first in blessings; finally, in the evangelist, Christ is made to speak as if in view of the three names (p. 238, cf. p. 30). But the trinitarian scheme (so he writes, p. 271), which had already come into use in the catechism before the year 35 and later assumed fixt form in Matt. 28:19, strove long in this shape to unite itself with the body of statement which had originated in its own loins. The product of this union, which probably took place in the second half of the second century, is the Apostles' Creed. "The symbol of the primitive Church is nothing else than the statement of the catechetical verities arranged according to the trinitarian scheme. In

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this fact is found the hitherto hidden source of the apostolic symbol" (pp. 271-3).

With this agrees R. Seeberg in the second edition of his *Dogmengeschichte* (vol. i, 1908). He also starts out in his historical investigation from the New Testament. In the matter of the formula of faith he reaches essentially the same results as A. Seeberg. There was already in the apostolic age a baptismal confession; it consisted of one article which was essentially christological, except that "God" was mentioned therein (pp. 162-3, 171-2). But alongside the confession (i. e., that in ecclesiastical use) "the faith" developed in much richer form, as he brings into notice against A. Seeberg (p. 162, cf. 171). A constituent part of "the faith" is assuredly to be found already in the formula in three articles, "as its frequent occurrence in the New Testament proves" (p. 162, cf. p. 66). He thinks that the unfolding which led to the trinitarian confession was somewhat as follows: The needs

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of the mission to the heathen on the one side, and general acquaintance with Matthew's gospel (containing the verse 28:19) on the other, led to a new baptismal formula on the one hand and to a new formula of confession in three articles on the other (cf. p. 175, note 5). "The external procedure at the formulation of the new formula was simple. The old christological article was allowed to stand in the chief place, the sentence containing mention of the Father, which already existed, was separated from it, while that referring to the Holy Spirit took the third place. So arose the Creed in its form of three articles, which corresponded to the baptismal formula with the same number" (p. 179). "In this there was completed an event with which none in the history of dogma can compare in importance, *viz.*, the triplex formulation of the Christian faith" (pp. 172, 179). The old confession in a single article was, after about 130-140 A. D., gradually dislodged throughout the entire Church by that

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which was exprest in three articles (p. 174*). As to the exposition thus sketched, we ask only the following question: Does it mediate for us in some degree sure knowledge of the historical relation of the Creed to the New Testament? That it does can hardly be maintained. Certainly A. Seeberg is right in affirming that the symbol originated in the instruction of the catechumens, and that relatively early a more or less firmly fixt formulation had been reached. But the view does not appear tenable that the apostolic age referred a formula of faith so obtained to Christ himself. The reference to the Lord's Prayer is not significant, for this was transmitted as really the words of the Lord, tho in recensions that have some variations; this was not the case with the formula of faith; so the former was retained in essentially unaltered form, but the formula of faith is said by A. Seeberg to have

*When Seeberg adds to the foregoing: "Among the formulations which were made that by the Roman Church later became dominant in the West " R. Seeberg is no longer in agreement.

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been recast time and again. And finally, it is not easily comprehended how, out of the inflated formulas that A. Seeberg discovers, the Apostles' Creed could have developed its simple form: I believe in God the Father Almighty; And in Jesus Christ, etc. Here appears a chasm. Moreover, the conjectures of R. Seeberg furnish no bridge from the old christological formula in two articles to that in three. One can not deny that the New Testament period and that immediately following furnish no tradition regarding the Creed, and that, so far as the historical question is concerned, we are driven to hypothetical construction. But scientific hypotheses always proceed from ascertained facts in order to explain suspected facts. The procedure is from that which is clear to the more obscure. In the present case, the ascertained and clear fact is that the early Church had such a Creed, which came out of the apostolic age and in part directly from the apostles. So that we regard it

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as methodically justified to begin an investigation regarding the historical relation of the Apostles' Creed to the New Testament (not with the New Testament, but) with the Creed and its history. Here we vision clearly the real beginning, the opening up, of the tunnel which is to be driven through the darkness of the mountain of the historical development. We shall bore from that point directly backward, and if we have according to all light the right direction, we may hope to find also from the New Testament the right starting point in order from the other end to cut through the last remnant that opposes progress, even tho hypothetical reconstruction be the means.

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IV

Our Apostles' Creed and the Baptismal Confession of the Early Church 300-800 A.D.

OUR Apostles' Creed in its exact verbal form is not traceable further back than the first half of the eighth century, to the writing of a French cleric named Pirminius (died 753), who with others founded the monastery of Reichenau. He was a friend of Boniface, and from this and other indications it appears with considerable certainty that he knew the symbol as the Roman form of the baptismal confession. Since now, starting from Rome, our Apostles' Creed has become the uniform baptismal confession of the entire West, and since the Roman congregation earlier and till about 700 A. D. employed a shorter formula of fewer members, we may name our Apostles' Creed "T" as the new Roman symbol in distinction from the old Roman formula "R." But here one must guard against a

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widely disseminated error, that to the Apostles' Creed as a whole or to the baptismal confession as such something specifically Roman adhered, as it were a Roman specialty. Whether that is true for primitive times we shall later have to consider; for the five centuries between 300 and 800 A. D. it does not hold. Pirminius tells the legend concerning the symbol, to the effect that at Pentecost the apostles composed it (therefore, at Jerusalem) in the strength of the Holy Spirit for their world mission. As always so here, the story excludes all thought of a Roman origin for the symbol; it also includes equally the representation that always and everywhere in the Church this baptismal confession was in existence. As a matter of fact, the Eastern Church has long used the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (we shall use the abbreviation NC for this name in this discussion) as its common baptismal symbol, and we have already discovered that it sprang from the same stem as T. But

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this duplex product, NC and T, is but the scanty remainder of a much richer fund. In the period named (300-800 A. D.) the tree of the baptismal symbol bore still more numerous branches and limbs, especially in the earlier portion of the period; that is to say, the Apostles' Creed produced both in the East and the West, indeed in the various lands, provinces, and even cities, certain variant recensions. The formulas in the East are distinguished from those in the West principally by this, that in them the products of the advancing development of dogmatic teaching were worked into the structure, while in the West, with few exceptions, the biblical-historical simplicity was preserved, as is shown by T. That even in the former cases there was only the working over of already existing formulas, and not the construction of new ones, is proved by the fact that, so far as we know, nowhere was N (the symbol of the Council of Nicæa of 325 A. D., which ends the confessional part with

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the words "And in the Holy Spirit") expanded to become a baptismal symbol; only the new dogmatic catchwords in N were worked into the already existing baptismal confessions. This appears in NC in significant examples. This formula (see above, pp. 10-11), which is attested as early as 379 as a baptismal formula by Epiphanius (cf. Hahn, §125*) rests, as is abundantly proved by Hort, upon the same old baptismal symbol that Cyril of Jerusalem in 348 asserted to be used by this mother church of Christendom. The wording of this appears in his *Catechesis* about as follows:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, Who, born of the Father, was true God before all the world, through Whom all was created, became flesh and became man (of the Virgin and the Holy Spirit [?]), was crucified and buried, rose on the third

*For this and other references cf. bibliographical note at end of volume.

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day, ascended to heaven and sat at the right hand of the Father, and shall come in majesty to judge the quick and the dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end. And in one Holy Spirit the Comforter, Who has spoken in the prophets. And in one Baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, and in one Holy Catholic Church. And in the resurrection of the flesh and in life everlasting (Hahn, §124).

For the West on the other hand we may adduce as typical the formula R, which is often attested as used by the Roman church, altho not earlier than the fourth century. It reads:

I believe in God the Father Almighty. And in Jesus His only begotten Son our Lord, Who was born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried, on the third day He rose from the dead, proceeded to heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father, from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Church, forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the flesh.

There is abundant testimony to show that the

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relation of this formula R to our new Roman formula is this, that they are in essential agreement as a whole, that nothing which is found in R is omitted in T, but that T has certain additions as against the older formula, the weightiest of which are: (1) Creator of heaven and earth, (2) descended to hell, (3) insertion of "Catholic" before "Church," (4) The Communion of Saints, (5) The life everlasting.

It is important to note that already in the Church of that time the variations of the formulas has attracted attention, tho it was understood that the character of the many recensions was due to conditions of the times; but it was assumed or asserted for all the communities of the entire Church that there was in existence a baptismal confession, while no confusion resulted or any marring of the sense of unity amid all these variations. The evidence of all this is to be discovered in the facts already submitted.

These circumstances make it evident that the

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origin of our Apostles' Creed as a special formula is of subordinate interest, and practically in any case only for that are its peculiarities significant. When, according to Caspari, the assertion is often repeated that T arose about 500 A. D. in South Gaul, against this must be recalled that the confession of South Gaul of that time lacked one characteristic mark in the article "Creator of heaven and earth." So that the newer hypothesis of the Englishman Burn may not be summarily dismissed—he thought that T may have taken form in Rome before 700 A. D. The investigation here suggested is how Rome came to substitute its new formula for the old symbol R. But this question may remain for the present uninvestigated. Whatever the answer, one fact stands firm and is above all important for the understanding of the situation—T is not to be regarded as an out and out new construction, but as a slight modification of a symbol already in existence.

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With the baptismal symbol as a whole we are next carried back to the beginning of the fourth century. While it is true of all the Western forms of the symbol that they go for their contents far back of the doctrinal questions discussed in the Arian and later controversies (cf. the type R), so also in the East for the Arian controversy and its settlement at Nicæa in 325 the general presence is to be assumed of baptismal confessions or apostolic formulas dogmatically less explicit. Baptismal confessions, like that adduced above from Jerusalem of the year 348, must be older than the Nicene statement. Moreover, Arius himself with his fellow believer Euzoius left a confession of his faith which begins: "We believe in one God the Father Almighty," while the second and third articles are contained fully after the type of other Eastern symbols (cf. Hahn, §187). There is another noteworthy fact. The controversy at Nicæa concerning the *homoousia* (that is, concerning the

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likeness or identity of divinity of the Son with the Father—for that is what was under discussion) received decision in the form of a trinitarian symbol which followed the norm of the baptismal confessions, except that it stopt with the article on the Holy Spirit. This fact is intelligible through this other—that the trinitarian baptismal confession, or, to speak in modern terms, the Apostles' Creed, formed the basis. We are not shut up here to inference solely, since it is historically ascertained that the Nicene formula rests upon one that is trinitarian which Eusebius of Cæsarea presented; and this held to the tenor entirely of a Creed like that of Jerusalem, only that as suggested by the dogmatic strife it broke off with the clause: "And in the Holy Spirit."* But of this at the very introduction Eusebius remarked that they had all received it in the instruction preparatory for baptism and at baptism itself. It may also be

*Cf. the author's *Marcus Eremita*, pp. 175-176.

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shown from his own writings that he had employed therein the symbol of his own Church at Cæsarea.* But he employed it as essentially the one common baptismal confession of the entire Church, and so was it always regarded. In the same way the Western Johannes Cassianus held up before Nestorius the symbol of Antioch, because Nestorius there received baptism, and at the same time remarked of this provincially characteristic symbol that it express the faith of all the churches (*De incarnatione Domini* vi. 3). And Leo the Great wrote in 449 to the bishop of Constantinople about his Roman symbol that the totality of the faithful throughout the world made use of it (*Epistle to Flavian*,

*It reads: We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Creator of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Word (N, the Son) of God, God of God, Light of light, Life of life, the only begotten Son, the First-born of all creatures, Before all the world begotten of the Father, through Whom all things were made, Who for our salvation became flesh and walked with men and suffered and rose on the third day and ascended to the Father (N, to heaven) and will come again in majesty to judge the quick and the dead. We believe also in one Holy Spirit (Hahn, §188).

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i. 2), although it was naturally as little concealed from him as from a Rufinus that exact verbal agreement did not exist.

We may, therefore, maintain that about 300 A. D. the Apostles' Creed was in force in the entire Church, only that the recensions of it differed in particulars. From the nature of the case Harnack and Kattenbusch arrive at this same point in time, only that in consequence of giving undue prominence to the Roman symbol they see the facts in another light. The universal character of the baptismal symbol, of which the Church of that time had so lively a consciousness, is not by them sufficiently taken into account. But the relationship is nearly the same as with the New Testament of that period. This was received as a whole in one spirit and as a unitary possession, yet it evinced all kinds of provincial differences, here containing a little more, there a little less. So it was with the symbol. In accordance with the fact, however, that about 300

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A. D. the great trinitarian doctrinal battles had not taken place is (otherwise than with the New Testament) the other fact that for this period there is a closer agreement of baptismal confessions to be assumed than was the case about 100 years later. For example, the Jerusalem symbol resembled the Western symbols more nearly than did NC. To be sure, the variances are sufficiently great to make possible the distinction between an Eastern and a Western type; on the other hand, the common basis is broad enough to substantiate the claim that the Apostolicum, or our formula taken as a whole, express about 300 A. D. the common faith of Christendom. It was the bequest of the old Catholic Church to the Church of the fourth century. The precise problem regarding its origin lies farther back.

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V

The Baptismal Symbol in the Early Catholic Church 170-300 A. D.

WE come now to the period in which the early Catholic Church, while under persecution from the State, consolidated itself against the great heresies of the second and third centuries, 300-170, backward to Irenæus. What information respecting the baptismal formula do we get from this period? Unfortunately—we have to confess—very little in comparison with what is gained from the fourth and fifth centuries. Not a single complete formula is preserved for us in the literature of this period, and—we may add—also none in that from the age before 170 A. D. The oldest complete formula that we know comes from the fourth century. We must, however, most strongly emphasize that the case is no different with the Roman Church and its

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symbol R. From the first three centuries we have no direct testimony to R, tho we have for the baptismal confession of Carthage (see below). We possess only the writing, dating from about 250 A. D., of a Roman presbyter, Novatian, regarding the rule of faith, from which we can argue the Roman symbol, altho he does not name it. Caspari has collected the passages in which are echoes of R (cf. Hahn, § 11). But Kattenbusch himself remarks on this (ii. 361-362):

“The passages are not so plain that without previous knowledge concerning R one would be constrained to see in them traces of the symbol. The coincidence in the exposition by Novatian and the general tenor of R reach just so far as in general to warrant the conclusion that he knew R. But it is evident that in the search for the symbol we should be in evil case depending on him (alone).”

But how can we assume from the outset that he knew and used R? Very easily, for this reason, because we observe of R, first attested in

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the fourth century, that it could not have arisen first in the dogmatic strifes of that century, but must have its origin in an earlier period. At any rate we often hear of the Roman community (for example, from Rufinus) that from early antiquity it cared for the precise guarding of the wording of its baptismal confession. Yet self-deception is not here excluded. What might not pass in the fourth century for primitive, even apostolic? What must decide for us is the dogmatic-historical test already adduced. And this will apply not simply to the Roman symbol, but as well to the other baptismal confessions of a later time. We, therefore, gain our knowledge of the baptismal confessions belonging to the early Catholic Church in the first instance from the symbols of the fourth and following centuries. To give an example, symbols like that of Jerusalem go back at once to the third century. Here to the Monarchian controversy points the addition in the second article; he who is of the ✓

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Father is attested as true God before all the world. But we may not conclude that the entire symbol was formulated then, for already the analogies out of the fourth century, during which anti-Arian formulas were inserted in the existing baptismal symbols, justify the assumption that the Jerusalem symbol itself, apart from the additional clause directed against the Monarchians, is older than the third century. The correctness of this procedure may be illustrated by a case from the West. About 400 A. D. Rufinus, already mentioned a number of times, attests for us the symbol of his church at Aquileia. It is very like our symbol R, except that in the second article it has, like T, the descent to hell (cf. Hahn, § 36). But besides this, in the first article it adds to the words "I believe in God the Father Almighty" the phrase "the invisible and impassible." On this Rufinus remarks in his exposition that it was added against such Monarchians as held that in Jesus Christ the Father had appeared

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and had suffered; *i.e.*, it was aimed at the Patripassians (chap. v.). But he rightly affirms that the symbol itself is older—indeed, he regards it as directly apostolic. Since the Western creeds very seldom exhibit dogmatic extension, the earlier form of the Eastern symbols is to be reached in the same way as in the Western, that is, by deleting the dogmatic additions. We may take as an example the symbol of Antioch (Hahn, § 130), attested in the fourth and the fifth centuries as essentially tho not fully accordant. The form of this, in its earlier condition, reaching back at least to the first half of the third century, is the following:

I believe in one and only true God the Father Almighty, Creator of all creatures visible and invisible. And in our Lord Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son (the) Firstborn of all creatures—here come in the later dogmatic additions—through Whom also the worlds were framed (the same word as in Heb. 11:3) and all was made. Who came on our behalf and was born of the

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Virgin Mary and was crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried, and arose on the third day according to Scripture, and ascended to heaven and shall come again to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in . . . the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection of the dead, and everlasting life.

It is obvious again that, as in the fourth century so in the early Catholic period, the further back we go the nearer the varied symbol-formulas approach each other and the more alike they become. On the other side the observation is not less important, that, even thus, differences in the common basis may be detected. If, for example, we compare the reconstructed Antiochian Creed with R, we do not find identity; indeed the corresponding members differ widely. In R it is said: "Who was begotten of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary;" in the Antiochian: "Who came on our behalf and was born of the Virgin Mary;" R says simply: "on the third day he rose from the dead," the Antiochian adds "ac-

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ording to Scripture;" the clause of R "sitteth on the right hand of the Father" is not found in the Antiochian; instead of R's clause "from thence he shall come" the Antiochian has "and shall come again;" R says "resurrection of the flesh," the Antiochian "resurrection of the dead" and adds to it, "life everlasting." When one takes in the fact that, outside of the dogmatic additions, the earlier basis has here and there undergone change, the comparison makes it evident that the hypothesis advanced by Kattenbusch (ii. 195ff.) in regard to the creed of Antioch is untenable in view of that creed itself. He holds that the church there came into possession of its creed by the simple process of the introduction of R. But the relationship between R and the creed of Antioch is the one fact upon which Kattenbusch builds his hypothesis. Historical testimony is entirely wanting to a proceeding of the Antiochian church so highly important as this would have been had it happened. Conse-

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quently, Kattenbusch may not refer to the introduction into the Orient of the distinctly Western Christmas festival as tho it were an assured parallel to the reception of R at Antioch. For concerning the introduction into the Orient of the Christmas festival we have well founded data extending even to mention of the year, especially from Chrysostom; but concerning the alleged introduction of the symbol we have no word.

It is not possible for us to go further in the designated way, *i.e.*, retracing the path and by comparison, than to say: the further back we go the simpler and more alike appear the varied forms of the baptismal confession, but complete identity is not reached.

The results gained in this manner, however, are supported and confirmed by the direct testimonies which we have from this period of the existence of the Apostles' Creed, tho, to be sure, with incomplete citations. In this connection we can take note only of the most significant of

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these traces. They point not to Rome but to Africa, especially to Carthage, and are found particularly in Cyprian and Tertullian. We possess letters of Cyprian's having to do with the controversy over heretic baptism of the year 258 A. D. The question involved is whether those who have been baptized by heretics must receive baptism again when they enter the larger Church. Especially the problem is whether this applies to the Novatians who, tho wholly orthodox in their doctrine (cf. the writing of their leader Novatian, referred to, p. 48), were at loggerheads with the Church in the matter of church discipline. Cyprian is in all cases in favor of rebaptism. On this he writes in Epistle 69:7: "If any one replies to us that Novatian holds firmly to the same law (*i.e.*, law of faith; see below) as the Catholic Church and uses the same symbol in baptism as we, that he knows the same God the Father, the same Son Christ, the same Holy Spirit, and that he can, therefore, employ the same right to baptize,

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inasmuch as he appears not to differ from us at all in the questioning at baptism—let that one realize that we have not in common with schismatics the one law of the symbol nor the same question. For when they say: 'Believest thou in the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting through the holy Church,' they utter a lie in the question, for they have no church." Similarly he writes in the name of numerous bishops gathered in a synod (Epistle 70:2): "Indeed, the very question which is asked at baptism is already a testimony to the truth. For when we say: 'Believest thou in everlasting life and in forgiveness of sins through the holy Church,' we mean that forgiveness of sins is granted only in the Church." These passages have extreme significance. They show that in connection with baptism Cyprian knew of a symbol which, as a unitary law, joined in one the whole Catholic Church. Significantly enough, he characterized it as trinitarian, and mentioned cursorily that at baptism questions

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were put to the candidate and answered by him, which questions evidently had as their content this law of faith. One of the questions, doubtless the last, he adduces. The indications which he gives are illustrated by later and also by earlier data (*i.e.*, from Tertullian; see below). From this we learn that shortly before baptism the symbol became known to the candidates and that at baptism it was put before them in the form of questions, to which they replied with a repeated "I believe." Cyprian affirms this usage and a concordant symbol as that of the entire Church and also of the Novatians. We learn something also of the form of the symbol. It is noteworthy, and a sign of spiritual freedom, that in the two citations he does not set the questions forth in identical form; in the second case "forgiveness of sins" comes after "life everlasting," because it is that of which he wishes especially to speak. The arrangement in Epistle 69 is certainly that of the symbol. Therefore it ended: "I believe in . . .

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the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting through the holy Church." The last member is particularly striking. We know from many reports from the fifth century that the Carthaginian symbol of that time ended thus: "Forgiveness of sins (resurrection of the flesh), and life everlasting through the holy Church" (Hahn, §§47-49). In that case Cyprian has given the wording exactly, and we see again how far back the symbol-formulas of a later time reached. To be sure, Cyprian does not mention the resurrection of the flesh. Yet, according to the testimony of (the earlier) Tertullian it must have been in the symbol and stood naturally between "forgiveness of sins" and "life everlasting." (cf. Epistle 73: 4, 5). But he passes this over because he is dealing with orthodox schismatics. Still it is important that his symbol is distinguished from R not simply by its closing characteristic formula, but also by the addition of "life everlasting."

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Cyprian's statements are partly confirmed and partly supplemented by his teacher Tertullian. In one passage, where Tertullian is adducing ecclesiastical usages which have their origin not in Scriptures but in tradition, he writes: "To begin with baptism, when we are going to enter the water, but a little before, in the presence of the congregation and under the hand of the priest, we solemnly profess that we disown the devil, his pomp, and his angels; then are we three times immersed as the Lord has directed (*i.e.*, Matt. 28:19) in the gospel" (*De corona* 3). There is then a double act of vowing attested (the renunciation), the first in the church and again immediately before baptism and evidently with the accompaniment of questioning, as later general testimony affirms. Further, the candidates give utterance in their answer to a confession, which Tertullian characterizes as a not unimportant extension of the trinitarian baptismal precept. We may assume it as certain that a double confession

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of the Creed as well as of the renunciation is implied. This also is generally confirmed later as having been early usage. Tertullian does not communicate the exact form of the baptismal confession, altho he has left an entire writing concerning baptism. Assuredly cooperating herewith is a custom that is indicated by much later testimony, and also attested, so it would seem, by Irenæus, in accordance with which the symbol was not written down nor permitted to be so written, in order that it might be held the more firmly in the memory and heart (cf. Irenæus, *Adv. haer.*, III., iv. 1). Only he intimates that at baptism to the mention of the three—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—that of the Church was attached. This emphasis upon the Church as the fourth part of the confession is easily explained if, as may indeed be assumed, as early as Tertullian's time the confession was framed in four questions and the last was worded as cited by Cyprian. For the ascertainment of the

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baptismal symbol in Tertullian's works we must have recourse to other than direct data.

There remains a third source for knowledge of the baptismal symbol in the period with which we are dealing. This is the so-called rule of faith of the early Church. By this name or by the title "rule of truth" the fathers who opposed Gnosticism later than Irenæus designate the normative content of faith or the dogmatic authority. It is not our task here to unfold the entire problem that is involved, but only to expound the relation of the rule of faith to the baptismal symbol. Consequently, we may assume one result as ascertained and practically universally recognized, namely, that in the rule of faith always the baptismal confession is embedded and is usually meant and indicated by that name. The particular grounds for this statement are three: (1) it is said of the rule of faith that it is received through baptism (*Adv. haer.* I., ix. 4); (2) it and the baptismal confession are in like

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fashion called the undivided law of Christians (Tertullian and Cyprian); (3) the reports concerning the rule of faith accord often in a surprising degree, but most of all is there concord with the general tenor of the Apostles' Creed (Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen). So, once, Tertullian says the rule of faith, which alone is unalterable and incapable of improvement, consists of the following:

"To believe in one God Almighty, Creator of the world, and in His Son Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, (He was) crucified under Pontius Pilate, on the third day raised from the dead, received into heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father, he shall come to judge the quick and the dead through the resurrection also of the flesh." (*De virg. vel.* 1.)

In one place he quotes it in briefer form, then again in more extended form; but he seems ever, as here, to follow the recognized order of the baptismal confession. To be sure, it must cause

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surprise that from the third article he regularly mentions only the resurrection of the flesh, altho according to the passages already adduced the members regarding the Holy Spirit and the Church were there; also, according to all analogy, that on the forgiveness of sins could not have been missing. But the explanation is that Tertullian always quotes the normative faith in opposition to the heretical gnosis, and the salient differentia here in the third article was the resurrection of the flesh. It is for this reason that in the last passage quoted above Tertullian inserts an "also (of the flesh)," which certainly did not stand in his symbol. On the like principle in Cyprian's citation of the symbol the resurrection of the flesh was omitted, because the Novatians, with whom he was then dealing, were on this point orthodox in their thinking. Out of the reports concerning the rule of faith we can reconstruct Tertullian's symbol with reasonable certainty. It reveals close relationship to R, also

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differences. With reference to the third article we are compelled to conclude, as with Cyprian's, tho with even more certainty as to Tertullian's as he cites it, that the rule of faith significantly contains "the life everlasting" (*De præscr. hæc.* 13). Further, inasmuch as all citations agree on this point, it appears certain that in the first article God is designated "Creator," just as the later African symbol names the Father Creator of all.* Once more, it is assured that the ascent to heaven is exprest passively; the ascent as given in R is not used. Whether in the birth of Christ the Holy Spirit is mentioned together with Mary is doubtful; but it is sure that Tertullian follows ever the later Carthaginian symbol: "Of the Virgin Mary," while R has "of Mary the Virgin." The sum of all this is that the symbol of Tertullian may not be identified simply with R.

Meanwhile Tertullian is summoned without hesitation as the star witness for the Roman char-

*Hahn §§47-49; cf. also Kattenbusch, i. 144, remark 3.

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acter of the baptismal symbol; particularly is he said to testify that the Carthaginian (or the African) communities received their symbol from Rome (Kattenbusch, i. 141). As a matter of fact, neither the one nor the other is the case. Tertullian treats the baptismal symbol and also the rule of faith which is related to it as something thoroughly ecumenical, a common possession of the churches. Next, he regards the rule as going back to Christ (Matt. 28:19) and the apostles (*De præscrip.* 13:19). The following is the connection in which he comes to speak of Rome in the passage cited so often since Harnack adduced it. He wants to prove how churches which, like the Carthaginian, could not claim for themselves apostolic origin could prove the apostolicity of the doctrine advocated by them or of the rule of faith. This came about simply through the fact that they were in accord in their teaching with the really Apostolic churches. To make this proof really complete would require

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considerable effort. But by concord with the congregations apostolically founded this proof can, according to Tertullian, be given in abbreviated form, that is, by the demonstration of agreement with just one apostolic congregation. For that purpose one would choose the church lying nearest which could claim foundation by an apostle. A person who was in Achaia, Macedonia, or Asia would assume as the standard by which to measure not the faith of Rome but of the congregation at Corinth, Philippi, or Ephesus; so one whose position was near to Italy need not go to Jerusalem (for his norm), but had Rome as a primitive apostolic congregation, concededly the only one in the West. Therefore, Tertullian had not immediately in mind historical dependence, he thought of local propinquity. So that in this sense he added: "Whence is the authorization (of our rule)," and then continued:

"Let us see what it (*i.e.*, the Roman Church) has learned, what it has taught, also what it, with

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the African churches, has put forth as the distinctive marks. It recognizes one God, the Creator of all, and Christ Jesus (born) of the Virgin Mary, the Son of God the Creator, and the resurrection of the flesh. It unites law and prophets with the evangelical and apostolical writings into one whole (and does not with Marcion reject the Old Testament). Therefrom it imbibes its faith (*i.e.*, instructs the catechumen), marks him with water (in baptism—*signare*, referring to the sign of the cross), clothes him with the Holy Spirit (that is, in the anointing and laying on of hands that was connected with baptism—*vestit* seems to indicate that there was conjoined the assumption of white clothing), nourishes him with the Lord's Supper, admonishes him to martyrdom (while the Gnostics affirmed that acknowledgment of the Christian faith before the heathen was unnecessary), and hence received no one into fellowship contrary to this method of institution (*institutio*, elsewhere *regula*)."

This is not to say that the African Church was founded from Rome, altho Tertullian seems to represent that all the congregations not of apos-

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tolical origin took their rise from those in the neighborhood that were so derived. But that the African Church had received the baptismal confession from Rome can be gathered from these sentences only in the sense that Africa had in general received its Christianity from Rome, and then naturally also its symbol, but not otherwise and not later than it had received the Scriptures, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. In the consciousness of Tertullian, the symbol had as little specifically Roman as had these other things; indeed, according to his words, Rome itself had first learned what it had taught. Moreover, that the form of the Carthaginian symbol does not necessitate assumption of direct dependence upon Rome has already been made apparent. With these demonstrations from Tertullian's works the last prop is taken away from the hypothesis of the Roman origin of the Apostles' Creed. The way is clear now to appreciate the expressions that appear in Irenæus, the earliest

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of the fathers who were opposed to Gnosticism. He speaks of the rule of faith—or, as he calls it, the rule of truth—as follows:

“Altho the Church is disseminated throughout the whole earth to its very ends, it has still received from the apostles and their disciples the faith in one *God the Father Almighty*, Who made the heaven, the earth, and the sea, and all that is therein; and on *one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, Who became flesh for our salvation*; and on *the Holy Spirit*, Who had made known through the prophets the plan of salvation and the theophanies, and *the birth from the Virgin*, and *the suffering and resurrection from the dead*, and the *bodily reception into heaven* of the beloved Christ Jesus *our Lord*, and his *return from heaven* in the majesty of the Father in order to a universal purification and *to awake all flesh* of all mankind; therefore, to Christ Jesus, our Lord and God and Savior and King, according to the will of the Father every knee shall bow; and he will execute *judgment* on all, and confer immortality, giving *life* to the righteous, and assume *everlasting* majesty. This proclamation and this faith has the Church received, as said; and altho

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it is scattered throughout the whole world, it guards this scrupulously, as tho dwelling in one house; and in concord it holds in faith these elements as with one soul and one heart, and harmoniously teaches and transmits (Irenæus here employs the technical term for instructing in preparation for baptism) this as with one voice. And altho the languages spoken throughout the world are varied, yet in sense the teaching is one and the same. And the congregations founded in Germany neither receive nor transmit another faith, or differently, than in Spain or among the Celts or in the East or in Egypt or in Libya or the churches established in the middle of the world. But just as the sun, God's creation, is one and the same in the whole world, so is also the preaching of the truth (*i.e.*, the rule of truth) everywhere, which illumines all men who would come to a knowledge of the truth" (*Adv. haer.* I., x. 1-2).

It is evident here, first of all, that a baptismal confession of the well-known type lies at the basis (of what Irenæus says). Tho Irenæus quotes it freely, not merely the analogies but also the rest

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of the citations adduced make it possible to recognize that the customary order of the symbol is set forth. Once more, this symbol is not identical with R, but, as has long been observed, has astonishing relationships with later Eastern formulas (for example, the "Who became flesh for our salvation" of the second article). This can be the less surprising in that the congregations of Lyons and Vienne, whose bishop Irenæus was, maintained the closest relations with Asia Minor. So the remark of Irenæus concerning this baptismal formula, to the effect that it is held in essential agreement throughout the Church, can cause no wonder in us after the discoveries we have already made. That would be possible if one thought that in the Apostles' Creed he recognized the clever work of early Roman Catholic Christianity. But, on the contrary, for us Irenæus only expresses what we have already found necessary to conclude on the basis of our investigation as we retraced our steps; and, again, through

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these results, his testimony is enhanced in trustworthiness.

We regard as a result won by both direct and indirect evidence this fact—that as at the end so also at the beginning of the early Catholic period the Apostles' Creed, *i.e.*, the common ecclesiastical baptismal confession, was already in existence, and that while it had a greater dogmatic simplicity, it also existed in a closer uniformity than later, yet not so that this uniformity reduced to mechanical unity. The formula R may, therefore, serve as a type, tho at that time it was not the symbol pure and simple, not the sole authority for the West.

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VI

The Pre-Gnostic Origin of the Baptismal Symbol

THROUGH the results of the preceding chapter we are brought face to face with the distinctive problem of this historical investigation. Unfortunately, this has not been exprest with sufficient clarity and sharpness. A statement of this character is the first condition of its solution, and we will attempt to formulate the question correctly. We assume as proven and granted that the early Church catholic after the last fourth of the second century possest a baptismal formula, practically the same everywhere, which bore the character of our Apostles' Creed. Since now this Church had solidified itself against the great movements of Gnosticism and Marcionitism which had arisen within its own circles—as is made evident by Irenæus himself—the dis-

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tinctive problem is to be stated thus: Is or is not the symbol (the Apostles' Creed) a creation of the Church which took form after Gnosticism had come into being, and is it or is it not, therefore, anti-Gnostic?

If we put the question to the Church and to fathers of the Church of that time, the first possibility is decidedly negatived. We have just heard Irenæus remark that the Church received the faith of its baptismal confession from the apostles and their disciples. And, in the first place, we have yet no reason to doubt this. On the other hand, to be sure, such statements of themselves do not satisfy. We are well aware how quickly in any fellowship that which is relatively late in its origin passes for that which is aged, provided it is in accord with the ruling spirit. As a result, that remark (of Irenæus) must submit to independent tests. There arises in this relation three possibilities, all of which have been scientifically advanced. (1) The baptismal sym-

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bol is a post- and anti-Gnostic creation of the Church (so Krüger and others); (2) or it was first formulated as a rule of faith by the Gnostics, whom the Church so far followed (so, especially, Harnack); (3) or finally it is pre-Gnostic and then in all events pre-Catholic (so, for example, Harnack, when, in his *Chronologie der altchristlichen Litteratur*, i. 529, he writes concerning the origin of the symbol: "One must go back of the period of the blazing conflict with Gnosticism." Concerning this conflict in his statements cf. my *Glaubensregel*, p. 317, remark 1). To settle these questions we must examine first the Gnostics, then the anti-Gnostic fathers, and finally the symbol itself from the point of view thus gained. Every one is in a better position to prove the last point and, therefore, we shall lay on it the chief stress. On the other hand we shall purposely leave entirely out of the account the passages in Justin Martyr (about 150 A. D.) which pertain to it. For he does not directly and

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expressly testify to the baptismal confession ; but the significance and valuation of the data he gives depend entirely upon the results which flow from the three lines of research indicated.

So far as the Gnostics are concerned, for the method of consideration as related to the Church of that time they fall into two chief groups: (1) Gnosticism proper, within which the Valentinians formed the most significant and influential group ; and, (2), the Marcionites. In relation to the Church they distinguished themselves apart in this, that Gnosticism pure and simple left untouched the current, ordinary Christianity of Catholics and the sheerly faithful, and built above it a "higher" Christianity of knowledge as a secret doctrine and secret practise of mysteries, for which ordinary Christianity was only a veiled disguise. Meanwhile Marcion, who had charged ecclesiastical Christianity with a Judaizing away from the primitive apostles, sought to break down the structure and in its place to erect in

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brazen manner one entirely new upon a Pauline basis. He rejected the Old Testament and the primitive apostolic Scriptures of the New, and preached God and Christ as love and not as judge. Gnosis and Marcion agreed above all in two points: they identified the Creator-God of the Old Testament not with the Father of Jesus Christ, but reduced him to the rank of a subordinate being (demiurge); and they held to a dualistic view of things, in consequence of which they discarded the hope of a bodily resurrection. A singularity in Marcion's system was that he made Christ come direct from heaven in his thirtieth year, therefore denying not only his birth from the Virgin, but in general his human birth and development.

So far as Gnosticism proper is concerned, if the foregoing exposition is correct, one would not expect to find that it had changed or made innovations in ecclesiastical baptism or its appurtenances. When Harnack expects to find in

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the anti-Gnostic fathers the expressions respecting peculiar Gnostic symbols of doctrine like the Apostles' Creed, the reason for his position is in a verbal misunderstanding. In spite of the information afforded (cf. my *Glaubensregel*, chap. VIII., pp. 322-330), the errant and misleading remarks are repeated in the fourth edition of his *Dogmengeschichte*. That presentation is altogether unhistorical which sets forth that between Gnosticism and the Church any clause of the Apostles' Creed, such as the typical R, was the subject of controversy. For example, so little did the Gnostics deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ that they put their secret teachings into the mouth, not of the "historical," but of the risen Christ, who is said by them to have imparted these teachings to his selected disciples during the forty days which lasted till his ascent into heaven. They so little denied the birth from the Virgin that through it Christ seemed to them to have attributed to him too much of the human,

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and so they would have it appear that his passage through Mary was like passage through a mere canal. With reference to the resurrection, see below. This relationship is confirmed also by the anti-Gnostic fathers. Tertullian says of the Valentinians that they confess the common faith (*Adv. Val.* 1), altho, to be sure, he charges them with being double-tongued in the matter. Harnack seeks to weaken this testimony by referring it to later Gnostics who had attached themselves to the ecclesiastical development. Nevertheless this is arbitrary and also incorrect. For before Tertullian, Irenæus repeatedly affirms that the Gnostics adhered to the faith of the Church, especially to the first and second articles. To be sure, they must have been in difficulties with regard to the member dealing with the "resurrection of the dead" or "of the flesh." Yet we have original proof that they mastered these difficulties by means of their allegorical method of exposition. But the Gnostics neither denied

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this member nor replaced it with a special re-formulation. When one confest to belief in "resurrection of the dead" the Gnostic understood by it something different from what was meant by the Church; and when they confest to the "resurrection of the flesh" they knew how to adjust themselves to it. So Tertullian reports (*De resur. carnis* 19). The radicals automatically understood by the resurrection perception of Gnostic truth; tho, to be sure, the majority took it to mean the freeing of the soul by death. To confess even the resurrection of the flesh caused them no difficulty. For Tertullian witnesses to their full-voiced "Wo to him who riseth not in this flesh!" But by this they meant—"Wo to him who in this life cometh not to a knowledge of the Gnostic mysteries." Here, then, is the relation of Gnosticism to the Apostles' Creed or the baptismal confession. The Gnostics neither formulated it nor recast it—by so doing they would only have

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made their case more difficult—they simply adjusted themselves to it and reinterpreted it. Exactly for that reason is wholly excluded the hypothesis that they could have created it. They adjusted themselves to it because they found it in existence; but they did not formulate it. What the Gnostics created to serve their necessities is contained rather in the secret tradition committed to their writings. In recent times these Gnostic writings have been made accessible in greater abundance. They contain, as already stated, alleged instructions by the risen One, but nothing about a confession; still, as would be expected from the entire scheme, there is in them reference, for example, to the death, resurrection, and ascent of Christ to heaven as firmly fixed matters of faith.

The case is somewhat different with Marcion. We possess a confession of his disciple Apelles through which shines as basis the second article of the baptismal symbol; but at the beginning

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the birth is not mentioned, and at the close instead of "From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead," it reads "He ascended into heaven, from thence he also is come" (Epi-phanius, *Haer*, xliv. 22). Now exactly that closing formula of the Creed is primitive and is witnessed in the pastoral epistles (see below). It is, consequently, evident that Marcion-Appelles undertook here a high-handed innovation, owing to their hostility to Christ in the character of judge. In that case, in exactly the same way, omission to mention the birth is to be regarded as dogmatic violence, corresponding with the act of Marcion in cutting away from Luke's gospel the first and second chapters and in discarding from the Bible of his church the entire Old Testament, regarded as so sacred (in the Church catholic). Gnosticism joins with the Church at large in bearing witness against Marcion that the baptismal symbol of the early Church was older than he and his "reform."

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A like result we gain from the anti-Gnostic fathers, especially in their rule of faith. By this rule of faith they set themselves in opposition to the Gnostics; it might appear, according to what has been already cited, that with the rule of faith also the baptismal confession contained in it is an anti-Gnostic creation. In order to destroy this appearance, the earlier sentences cited regarding the rule of faith must be supplemented. The rule of faith of those fathers did embrace the symbol, but it was not exhausted thereby. In the passage cited from Tertullian (p. 62), only because he simply as a Montanist is intent briefly to sum up orthodoxy does the rule of faith agree closely with his baptismal confession. Where he formulates the rule of faith in combating Gnostics and Marcionites, he adduces considerable in addition; and precisely in this addition, in this exposition of the formula—not in the formula itself—lies that which was opposed to Gnosticism. Thus he writes (*De præscr.*

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haer. 13): "The rule of faith is that according to which it is believed, in general, that there is only one God and no other, who is the Creator of the world, that He in the beginning from Himself has caused to proceed," etc. Similarly in the passage cited above (cf. p. 67 from *De præscr.* 36) he adds to the "Son of God" of the abbreviated second article the word "the Creator;" so also in *De virg. vel.* 1 (cited above) he interpolates in the third article a significant "also": "Resurrection *also* of the flesh." Similarly Irenæus, when quoting the rule of faith in the first article ("God the Father Almighty"), adds a Scriptural expression that characterizes him as creator of the world, and in that way meets the Gnostic distinction of the highest God from the (demiurge or) creator of the world (I., xxii, 1). This does not escape Harnack, who writes: "First through a definite interpretation can the confession perform the service of parrying the Gnostic speculation and the Marcionitic under-

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standing of Christianity.”* But he has not drawn definitely enough the necessary inference therefrom, *viz.*, that the confession itself, the Apostles’ Creed, must therefore be unconditionally pre-Gnostic.

In what has just been set forth is exactly the third ground of proof of the pre-Gnostic source of the symbol, that is, its very character. Every one can see that the Nicene Creed was formulated against Arius, for it contains the statement of the *homoousia*, which was established against Arius. Had the baptismal symbol arisen as a means of battle against the Gnostics, it must have contained the chief anti-Gnostic statement of the Church. Such might appear to be the case so far as the third article is concerned, where is found the resurrection of the flesh. But other formulas, such as that of Jerusalem, have “resurrection of the dead”—which is not sufficient as against the Gnostics. Moreover,

**Dogmengeschichte*, 3d ed., i. 325, also the 4th ed.

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the pointed formula: "Resurrection of the flesh," may, as Caspari has shown, have been built up against the heathen and their teaching regarding immortality. In this way Ignatius and Clement of Rome had already employed the expression (cf. Hahn, Appendix). Besides, Tertullian shows how the Gnostics accommodated themselves to this statement. Yet, because of this clause alone, one may not claim that the symbol is anti-Gnostic. Still, on the other hand, it must be regarded as certain that had the symbol been formulated against the Gnostics, it would not have omitted to designate God the Father as Creator. And yet from this designation it would not necessarily follow that an anti-Gnostic source is to be affirmed, for the activity of God as Creator was of necessity emphasized on occasion in the presence of the heathen. While, then, the early Roman symbol and also evidently that of Irenæus had no clause in the first article referring to creation, such symbols could not possi-

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bly be of specifically anti-Gnostic origin (so decides Kattenbusch, ii. 489). It is also to be noted as a matter of importance that in the Roman and also in the Carthaginian symbol "Church" is described only as "holy," tho as against the heretics it is plainly designated as "Catholic," so in the later symbols (cf. the Muratorian Canon, and Tertullian). At any rate "Catholic" as qualifying "Church" would not be unconditionally anti-Gnostic, for the word was not at first so significant; its original sense was rather equivalent to "general" or "belonging to the whole Church" (Ignatius, *Ad Smyrn.* 8:2). Yet the omission of this word confirms the "pre-Catholic" source of the formula. Finally, it should not escape observation that three-fourths of the symbol have in general nothing to do with the Gnostic controversy. The result as drawn from the symbol itself is, therefore, that it is neither anti-Gnostic nor anti-Marcionitic.

The inference necessary is, consequently, that

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the symbol, and with it the Apostles' Creed, is as a whole pre-Gnostic, older than the Gnostic-Marcionitic crisis, therefore also pre-Catholic.* In that case it can not have arisen ± 150 , as Harnack conceives (*Dogmengeschichte*, xiv. 356), since, at least in Rome, the Gnostic crisis had then long been reached and had already led to abscissions and decisions (cf. Justin Martyr). Consequently, at the end of the post-apostolic age or at the latest about 130 A. D., it must have been—not formulated, but—already in existence, and that too essentially in the form in which we meet it in the so-called early Catholic period. The ecclesiastical writers are, therefore, right in speaking of their confession as something that reached back into the time of the primitive Church (cf. Irenæus).† If that is so, we have

*For statement of the use of the term "Catholic" cf. my article "Die Entstehung des neutestamentlichen Kanons unter dogmengeschichtlichem Gesichtspunkte" in *Internationale Zeitschrift*, 1909, pp. 1286-1287.

†I might suggest here that with this view the data afforded by Justin are at least in full accord. Cf. R. Seeberg, *Dogmengeschichte*, 2d ed., i. 172ff.

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indeed no reason to assume that the small and insignificant variations, such as are in evidence in the symbols of the early Catholic and later periods—that is in their common basis—did not exist then, at any rate, in good part. The symbols of Rome, Carthage, Lyons, Antioch, Jerusalem, and so on, had not then been fully compared, and there was no mechanical identity; but the variations are in no place contradictions. The common basis, as in the case of the majestic beginning, “I believe in God the Father Almighty,” was broad and deep enough to permit the whole to be seen as a real unison.

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VII

The Source of the Baptismal Symbol in the Earliest Mission to the Heathen

WITH the conclusion that the baptismal symbol reaches back into the pre-Gnostic period, it seems to us that the critical point is reached in the historical investigation as it mounts backward. In order to estimate correctly the significance of this, one must take into account how relatively small on one side and closely bound together on the other was the Church of the post-apostolic period. But there remains the question whether we can from this point retrace our steps with the symbol in approach to the New Testament, and how eventually we may accomplish it.

In this connection be it said that in this sketch we purposely disclaim search for and working out of traces of the symbol in the scanty literature of

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the post-apostolic age. The reason is the same as that on account of which we let Justin Martyr pass unestimated. From the post-apostolic writings there comes nothing from which one may conclude with certainty the existence of a symbol. On the other hand, the silence of these writings can not be used in the form of the *argumentum e silentio* against the existence of such a symbol, not even the *Didache*. Remember that in one whole writing devoted to the subject of baptism Tertullian imparts nothing definite regarding his symbol, while, reversely, the *Didache* cites twice the trinitarian injunction about baptism (vii. 1, 3). Consequently, the interpretation and evaluation of the data which proceed from the post-apostolic age depend wholly upon the results which have been gained regarding the baptismal confession in the periods following that age. This holds true not merely for the view we advance, but for every view of the symbol. For example, Kattenbusch takes the position that R,

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in 140 A. D., had in Rome already been in existence for decades, altho he could find no trace of it in the Shepherd of Hermas, which was written in that city about that time. Against Harnack on this he simply remarks: "In Hermas I see absolutely no witness in favor of my hypothesis regarding R, but also no serious testimony adverse to it" (ii. 334, remark 118). Since it is our intention to set forth strongly the decisive points and to adduce the arguments by which a decision can be reached, without going into the minutiae, it is advisable to pass by the post-apostolic literature. For, to use the words of Kattenbusch, it furnishes, to be sure, no satisfactory witness for, tho it offers no real argument against our view.

Still there is left a means of assistance, through which we may hope to reach still further. This is, once more, the symbol itself. We take R as a type of its earliest form, yet without leaving altogether out of sight the variants of the

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other formulas. We have now arrived at the end of the post-apostolic age as the *terminus ad quem* for the origin of the Creed. The next question is whether one may perhaps arrive at an extreme *terminus a quo* for its origin. I have at least hopes of this. Let it be remembered that at first Israelites and afterward heathen were received into Christianity; then the question frames itself whether the Apostles' Creed was calculated for believing Israelites. This seems hardly conceivable. For the member of the first article, God Almighty, expresses altogether the Israelitic view of God. An Israelite would have no necessity to learn anew or to confess this article on becoming a Christian. Still further, the formula on the resurrection of the flesh can have been constructed only against heathen views, since the participation of the body in the resurrection was the most offensive part of the Christian hope, while the pious Israelite of that period knew no other than a bodily

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resurrection. Finally notice is to be taken of the fact that as far as we can trace back the trinitarian symbol (that is, to Tertullian) it is always met in connection with the "renunciation" (*i.e.*, of the devil in baptism*). The wording of this renunciation is about as follows: "I renounce thee, Satan, and thy pomp, and thy angels, and thy works." Thereat the confession closed, and, moreover, in Greek-speaking Christendom, with the addition of the words to the renunciation: "And I promise myself to Thee, O Christ." Tertullian had already testified that the renunciation was connected with a religious-ethical detachment from the worship of heathen deities, which was regarded as the worship of demons and the devil. One must naturally exclude the idea that in the early period such a renunciation was demanded of converted Israelites. The God of Israel was considered the Father of

*TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Cf. the article "Renunciation of the Devil" in the *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, ix. 488-489.

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Jesus Christ. The mission to the heathen may consequently be regarded as the *terminus a quo* also of the trinitarian baptismal confession with the connected renunciation.

Now the Apostle Paul was the initiator of the mission at large to the heathen, and not only this, he with his assistants carried it through in magnificent measure. We may, consequently, state at once the question as the source of the symbol in the following form: Is it possible or probable that we may carry back the Apostles' Creed as a whole into the period of the great Pauline mission to the heathen? A question preliminary to this is whether we are necessitated to halt anywhere within the time of which we are speaking. R. Seeberg thinks (as we saw, p. 31) that the trinitarian confession arose between 130 and 140 A. D. through the transformation of an old confession having but a single article, and that there was connected therewith an event of incomparable significance in the dogmatic-historical

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sphere. But against this is all historical analogy ; there is no direct historical testimony to such an event, which must in the nature of the case have come to the consciousness of those who took part in it. And what motive does he give for such a creation? The needs of the mission to the heathen on the one side, and the knowledge of the Greek Matthew, with the passage 28:19, on the other. Apart from everything else, the last hypothesis seems to me, in the first place, to rest upon the conception current in the history of religion and of the Church, that religious and ecclesiastical life was influenced above all by literature. On the contrary, it undoubtedly is more likely that the actual practice of trinitarian baptism in the Church influenced the author of the gospel of Matthew than the reverse. So far as the needs of the mission to the heathen are concerned, it is difficult to imagine why it did not become necessary to stress the "God" of the first article early in the course of things, and not far-

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ther along in the development. As it seems to me, this bar may not close the way to the earlier date. Kattenbusch thinks that the symbol—which for him is R—arose about 100. As he says: “Looking at the contents, I would rather go farther back than bring it down anywhere later” (ii. 328-329). Then why does he not follow out the results of the impression which he receives from the contents of the symbol? “Only,” he says, “inasmuch as the first epistle of Clement does not demand at all that one think that in Rome such a formula as R was in authority.” Now altogether apart from the question whether this (1 Clement) is pertinent—for of significant matter it contains not alone the trinitarian oath in 1 Clem. 58: 2—we are reminded that the Shepherd of Hermas did not prevent Kattenbusch from conceiving that R was in existence about 130-140 A. D. Why should it be otherwise with 1 Clement? In fact Kattenbusch himself in that passage doubts “whether

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it is a conclusive argument." Above all he wholly omits to explain why it should happen that exactly in the year 100 and in Rome the trinitarian symbol was formulated. There are adduced neither testimonies nor illuminating motives for such an event. And that in the post-apostolic literature nothing is said of the symbol is at least as good an argument for its existence as against it. That would be the case if the question were raised at any time or place with regard to something not altogether indifferent. Consequently, nothing opposes our going back with this symbol into the first decade of the mission to the heathen. Then whoever surmounts with the Apostles' Creed the mountain of the Gnostic-Marcionitic crisis—and in this Kattenbusch and Seeberg are with us, and in part also Harnack—must needs pass on down the descent of the development which leads to that point. Of course, this does not take us to Pentecost, as the old legend had it; but it does lead to the be-

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ginnings of the Church which was composed of converts from the heathen, for the passing of the gospel from Jews to the heathen is the one historical provable event to which we can still retrace our steps. We may not halt with the Apostles' Creed till we reach this point.

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VIII

The Baptismal Symbol in the Pauline and Post-Pauline Literature of the New Testament

WITH this result we have now reached the point, in accordance with the outline already set forth, at which we must insert the spade from the other side. In order to fix the historical relationship of the Apostles' Creed to the New Testament, we shall relate it to the latter not simply as a whole, but to the literature directed to the converts from the heathen—Pauline and post-Pauline, epistles and gospels. Since now it is unquestionable that direct information as to the symbol and its origin is given neither therein nor, in general, in the New Testament, the problem can be stated only in this way: In those writings is there anything that speaks for or against the supposition that in the domain

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of the Pauline mission to the heathen the use of a symbol of the type of our Apostles' Creed was customary at baptism?

Is there anything against it? Perhaps, the facts that in these writings the symbol is not cited, that respecting its origin no information is imparted. Certainly this is not without historical significance. As it seems to me—against A. Seeberg; cf. especially the silence of the Acts of the Apostles—this suggests that a confession-formula was not attributed to Christ himself, as were the words of the Lord's Supper, which, as every one knows, Paul also referred to him (1 Cor. 11: 23ff.). But in general, there is necessity for caution against unhistorical anachronisms in coming to conclusions respecting this silence. The more one stresses the occasional character, the significance in relation to concrete facts, of the New Testament writings, the more must he realize for himself that they set forth the rich, lively, full-blooded life of the Church. That is

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in full flood behind both writer and reader who move therein, well-known and familiar. It is only special circumstances, pure chance—to speak in human fashion—which has brought it about that in Paul's writings there is contained a historical report, gospel-like in form, of the Lord's Supper. He bewails misuse of this celebration. Of life happenings at baptism, calling forth an exposition of its order, we hear nothing. But it would be thoroughly unhistorical to regard as possible anything like a strife over the Apostles' Creed in the apostolic age. A great controversy did rage—and we have information about it—that waged by a narrow Jewish Christianity concerning the freedom from the law of the Pauline heathen-Christian Church. But that had nothing to do with baptism and a baptismal confession. On the other hand, as even Weizsäcker recognizes, the apostolic age witnessed no doctrinal controversy over Christology. To the conception which we have gained one item is

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to be added. We hold that by the historical witnesses we have shown that the earliest history of the symbol is not to be thought of as the dominance of a somewhat strictly bounded formula, but as a coexistence of formulas which agree in everything essential but not in a mechanical fashion. There were original statements which spoke of the resurrection of the flesh, and others of the resurrection of the dead; so there were some that stopt here, and others which added "life eternal," and they were in use side by side. And finally, it would be unhistorical to suppose that the baptismal confession comprehended the whole of (Christian) doctrine. There coexisted at all times the apostolic preaching, which was early committed to writing, and the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Consequently, for a considerable time, at least in the Eastern Church, the confession had not so much a dogmatic-authoritative significance as one that was cultic and ethical—for the candi-

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dates for baptism (cf. my *Marcus Eremita*, chap. XII).

If we ask now what demands we must make on the literature named if through it we are to confirm, or at least support, our view (gained without reference to this literature) of its historical relations to the baptismal symbol, it seems that the permissible extreme of claim will stand as follows: (1) There will be allusions to a confession, where possible in connection with baptism; (2) the same important members as are contained in the symbol will obtrude themselves as chief elements of the faith, where possible also in verbal echoes of the symbol; and (3) particularly the trinitarian basis of the symbol will also be present. So much, it seems to me, is provable with certainty. With reference to a confession of the Christian, Paul says (Rom. 10: 6ff.): "The righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise (cf. Deut. 30:12-13). Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?

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(that is, to bring Christ down from above). Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach: That if thou shalt *confess* with thy mouth *Jesus as Lord* (cf. 1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11), and shalt believe in thine heart that *God hath raised him from the dead*, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." It is evident that Paul is not here concerned with the duty of confessing Christ before the unbelieving, but with faith so far as it mediates salvation. This the believer does as a confessor, and therein he acts in accordance with prophetic word. But the confession comes naturally into connection only as the oral expression of one who believes at heart. Therefore, the content of faith and the content of the confession are by Paul not dis-

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tinguished according to the subject matter, but only in accordance with a historical parallelism. So the confession which he here sets forth will have something of the content: "I believe that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that God has raised him from the dead." Over hasty would be the conclusion that the confession had just this much in it; it is enough if what he gives is there in the midst. The passage comes to recollection again when Paul reminds Timothy (1 Tim. 6:12): "Fight the good fight *of the faith*, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses." It is plain (cf. Von Hofmann on the passage) that Paul is recalling to Timothy his entrance into Christianity, which, therefore, is connected with a confession as it is with baptism (cf. Tit. 2:5-7; in both places occurs "life eternal"), and this confession Paul assumes as a definite and well-known thing. When now Paul continues: "I charge thee in the sight of

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God, who quickeneth all things, and of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession; that thou keep the commandment without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ"—how spontaneously, and at the same time significantly, these words explain themselves, provided they echo the baptismal confession, with an element of which the "before Pontius Pilate" agrees even to the very preposition.

One may not assert that if his confession agreed somewhat closely with R, Paul could not have exprest himself as he did. Since the connection with "life eternal" was especially close, he could easily have changed the "God Almighty" into "God who quickeneth all things;" and again, the witness of Christ to the Christian confession he might have seen, not indeed in words (John 18:37) but, in the central fact "crucified under Pontius Pilate" and have referred to it. At any rate, he was under no necessity to repeat to

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Timothy the *verba ipsissima* of the confession; a gentle touch would set the chords vibrating in his soul. The same is true for 2 Tim. 4: 1, where Paul exhorts Timothy again in a formula with two articles: "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the quick and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom." For here is the echo of the characteristic closing formula of the second article, which we have met already in the first preaching of Peter to the heathen (Acts 10: 42) and again in 1 Pet. 4: 5.

Before we pass from these passages to those where, without direct citation of a confession, the wording is heard as an echo of the same, I would insert at this point the data from the epistle to the Hebrews. For inasmuch as this is directed also to Jewish Christians, I do not venture on the score of its late date to draw conclusions from it with reference to matters pre-Pauline. Since there are many grounds for be-

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lieving that the author was dependent upon Paul, we give the data here. This writing three times [3:1; 4:14; 10:23] mentions "the confession" in a manner altogether like that of the pastoral epistles, and in one place indisputably in connection with baptism (10:19-23): "Having, therefore, (in Jesus) a great priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience (cf. 1 Pet. 3:21) and our body washed with pure water; Let us hold fast the confession of our faith that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised." The content of the confession here appears as future blessedness in heaven. The surety is the Christ who is exalted to heaven as priest. As such he is the central figure of the confession in 4:14: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, who hath passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession." And in 3:1 Jesus is called "the Apostle and High Priest of

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our confession." As the mediation of this there is on the one side his death and indeed the cross (12:2) and on the other side his resurrection from the dead (13: 20), his ascent into heaven (as above), and his seat at the right hand of God (1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2); at the same time there is remembrance of his reappearance (9:28); and in 9:26 his first appearance in the world is introduced with the formula: "in the end of the ages . . . to put away sin"—a statement that was afterward characteristic of the Egyptian symbol.*

Still another passage in the epistle is deeply significant. There the author sketches the fundamental instruction which the reader received when taken into the number of the faithful; and he gives (according to the correct reading) as the result: "Repentance from dead works, and faith toward God" and as its contents: "the

*Cf. my article "Ein neues Symbol aus Egypten," in *Neue kirchl. Zeitschrift*, 1897, pp. 543ff.

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teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection from the dead, and of eternal judgment" (6:1, 2). If we construe these expressions as referring to the baptismal confession and its christological contents, nothing stands in the way of assuming the existence of the common baptismal symbol at the time of writing of the epistle to the Hebrews.

We may now return to Paul and to the passages which in content and form recall either the confession or a confession. Here belongs from the pastoral epistles 2 Tim. 2:8: "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, (cf. Rom. 10:10) according to my gospel." If any one would conclude from this and other passages that Paul had in his symbol a reference to the family of David, it would, so far as our view is concerned, present no serious difficulty (see above p. 106). Further, one might recall 1 Thess. 1:9f., where Paul reminds the Thessalonians of their conversion a few weeks

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earlier, and writes: "How ye turned unto God from idols [cf. the "renunciation"], to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven [here the ascent into heaven is assumed], whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come." Weightier still is the passage 1 Pet. 3: 21, 22 which depends upon a mention of baptism (which is called by name)—the prayer directed to God for a good conscience "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ: who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." Finally there deserves to be brought especially into notice the passage 1 Cor. 15: 1ff., where Paul writes, with pregnant employment of the terms "delivered" and "received," later so much used in instruction preparatory to baptism: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you [in the mission], which also ye received [as catechumens], . . .

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by which also ye are saved [cf. Rom. 10: 9], in what words I preached it unto you, if ye hold it fast, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that *Christ died* for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he *was buried*; and that he *hath been raised* on the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once," etc. The change in construction suggests that in verses 6ff. the "then he appeared" begins a series of appearances of the risen Christ which is now given [to the Corinthians] for the first time and did not belong to the principal parts of the earliest instruction. On the other hand, this passage neither necessitates nor justifies us in limiting the missionary-catechetical instruction given by Paul to the simple impartation of a formula. As his report concerning the Lord's Supper permits us to see, he narrated to the Corinthians, assured-

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ly in the manner of the gospels, the story of two appearances of the risen Christ which were of importance clearly as the most significant and as occurring on the third day. Since there is here the following series of facts—that the order of events stated agrees astonishingly with that of the second article of the baptismal symbol, that this is the one passage where Paul speaks of the burial of Christ and mentions the third day as that of the resurrection, and that both these formulas agree closely with the oldest forms of the symbol—the entire passage is really explained, as simply as suitably, on the supposition that Paul is here recalling to the Corinthians their confession of faith at their baptism, just as he reminded Timothy of his in the passage cited earlier. At any rate, this explanation is historically far more probable than the inverse hypothesis that the formula “buried and rose on third day” in 1 Cor. 15 was taken up into the newly formulated symbol about 150, as Harnack assumes

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(*Dogmengeschichte*, 14:168). The practise of the Church was not puzzled out in the study of *litterateurs*.

Whether we can assume as possible for the Pauline writings a trinitarian symbol remains as yet an open question. The circumstance that in many passages we find mentioned only God and Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 8: 6) can decide against it as little as does the passage (1 Cor. 15) demand a sheerly christological confession with only one article. For in this passage Paul is avowedly incomplete in his statement ("first of all"); besides, he was under no necessity to adduce a trinitarian formula. For example, it is simply natural that Paul should exhort Timothy only by God and Christ, and should not add the Holy Spirit, of whom he says, in 2 Tim. 1: 14, that he dwells in him (Timothy) as in all Christians. More imposing is the objection that Paul speaks of only one baptism and that in the name of Christ (Gal. 3: 27; Rom. 6: 3; cf. Acts 8: 16;

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19:5). Against this is to be said (1) that in none of these passages is the complete course of baptism described, it is simply characterized as Christic in its central significance; (2) the discourse is never of baptism as active (like Matt. 28: 19; *Didache* 7), but always as passive (the act of being baptized). Since it is evident not only from later writings, but even from the *Didache* (9:5), that even after the use of the trinitarian formula one could speak of the Christian as "baptized in the name of Christ," it is time to cease using this method of expression as conclusive against the existence of the trinitarian baptismal formula.* (3) Moreover, Paul often enough characterizes the Holy Spirit in the same way as does the trinitarian confession—as a divine factor in the work of salvation alongside of Father and Son. So 1 Cor. 12: 4-5: "There

*The remark of R. Seeberg, that the *Didache* (9:7) represents an earlier baptismal form, because the prayer in the Lord's Supper as given in the *Didache* is older than itself (*Dogmengeschichte* 2d ed., i. 177-178) is answered by the fact that *Didache* 9:5 is no part of a prayer for the Lord's Supper.

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are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all." Also in the well-known passage 2 Cor. 13:14: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," etc. In this connection belong also such deutero-Pauline passages as 1 Pet. 1:2: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ;" and Jude 20-21: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." There can be no doubt that the contents of the Pauline faith are essentially exprest by the members of the third article of the symbol: the holy Church (Eph. 5:25), the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:14; cf. Eph. 1:7), resurrection of the

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dead (1 Cor. 15:12; cf. Acts 24:21), and life eternal (Rom. 5:21, 6:22; 1 Tim. 6:12, etc.).

If we have kept fully before us the form of the problem with which we started, it seems that as a result of what has been said we may assert that there is absolutely nothing against and much in favor of the conclusion that a baptismal confession of the character of the early ecclesiastical Apostles' Creed was already in existence and current during the Pauline mission to the heathen. We have found no reason to depart from the hypothesis gained in the first instance from later sources; rather through it many passages from the Pauline letters appear in a clearer light.

The possibility of more extended proof from the Pauline literature supplies the deficiency which arises from the scantiness of the Johannine epistolary literature. If one may assume for the Pauline mission and its period the existence of the baptismal symbol, of course one may presume it for the period of the Johannine

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writings. The only question would be whether there are cases which go against the assumption, to which the answer is negative. On the contrary, in these writings there is much use of the expressions "believe" (particularly in the formula "believe in;" cf. J. Haussleiter, *Zur Vorgeschichte des apostolischen Glaubens*, 1893, p. 52, remark 90) and "confess" (1 John 2:23, 4:2, 15; 2 John 7). As general and fundamental elements of the faith there appear three things: God who is love, his only begotten Son whom he sent into the world, and life eternal which we are to gain through him (cf. 1 John 4:2ff; 2 John 7; and the gospel, 1:14). If we look from this to the symbol, we shall be astonished at certain connections, especially in such phrases as "only begotten" accompanying "son," which are foreign to the Pauline epistles but are current in John (cf. John 1:14, 18; 3:16; 18; 1 John 4:9). This fact seems to Caspari reason enough for him to incline, under the presumption that R ex-

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hibits the original form of the symbol, to the opinion that Asia Minor, particularly the region of John's activities, was the birthplace of the same. But the thought circle of John recalls still more than R the symbol of Irenæus with its "became flesh" in the second article, by which it points, like R, to the "resurrection of the flesh" in the third article. This is a statement which we can hardly conceive Paul as using, especially in view of his "flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God" in 1 Cor. 15:50.* At the close Irenæus seems to suggest "eternal life," in this being, so to speak, more Johannine than R. We have always to reckon upon original variations in the baptismal confessions, as has already been remarked.† When this is remembered, and also the limited character of the sources, a clear title

*Still cf. Clem. xxvi. 3: 2 Clem. ix. 1; Justin Martyr, *Dial.* lxxx: "Resurrection of the flesh." On the whole cf. Caspari, iii. 154-158.

†Something analogous to this is in my *Uebergabe der Evangelien beim Taufunterricht*, 1909, p. 45.

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seems to be given to conclude that the result we gained from examination of the Pauline writings is not destroyed, but rather supported by the Johannine writings.

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IX

Its Rise in the Primitive Church upon the Basis of the Trinitarian Baptismal Command

OUR conclusion refers to the trinitarian symbol as a whole and does not assert authorship by Paul. To such a conclusion we are never led. On the contrary, the testimony of Paul himself must be granted full weight as he offers it in 1 Cor. 15 in relation to the central positions of his confession—that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day. Of this he says not only that this substance of preaching was common to him and all the original apostles (1 Cor. 15: 11), but that he, even as the Corinthians themselves, had first received it as something transmitted (verses 1-3). But when could this have happened, if not at his baptism;

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and whence could it have come, if not from the Jewish-Christian Church (cf. Acts 9:17-19)? With this agrees in reality the symbol itself in the second article, as typically given by R. If one regards the preexistence of Christ as a special doctrine of Paul's, the symbol discloses nothing of that doctrine. As Kattenbusch says (ii. 498): "R exhibits no one of the theories of Paul." On the contrary, its entire tenor is primitive-Christian and conditioned by the Old Testament. Kattenbusch has, from this point of view, characterized it excellently (of course in the form R). He says that the symbol arose in a Christian congregation which "regarded itself as the real Messianic congregation and measured itself still primarily by the synagogue," while the symbol "corresponds to the preaching which was employed in the missionary work, as shown in the Acts." We are not concerned here to ask how Kattenbusch reconciles this with his conclusion that R arose about the year 100 in Rome, where

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he grants the most of the converts were from heathenism. It is sufficient that he supports our conclusion respecting the symbol, especially its central part, which deals with christology. We conclude that the Creed is not a Pauline creation, but is pre-Pauline..

This view is expressly recommended by a single item in the symbol—the noteworthy time mark in the words “under Pontius Pilate.” An interesting study of this passage was published in 1895 by the Roman Catholic scholar, Morawski, in the *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, pp. 91ff.; and if Kattenbusch had known of it, he would certainly not have said: “This mark of time is after the Roman fashion of thought. One living in Palestine would have thought sooner of King Herod than of a temporary governor” (ii. 632). Against this Morawski shows that the phrase “‘under Pontius Pilate’ means simply that our *Credo* arose not in the metropolis of the Roman empire, but in the province of

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Judæa. It is very natural that any one writing in the province should refer rather to the name of the governor in fixing a date than to the emperor (king), for the former is better known to the reader in a place. An author in the metropolis would not have that view of things." While he adduces analogies from the inscriptions, he regards it as sufficiently proved "that our symbol, with the eponym Pontius Pilate, owes authorship not to Rome, but in the province of Judæa" (p. 94). And he thinks that a conclusion may be drawn from those words with reference not merely to the place, but also to the time of its origin. It is deducible from this that the author of the symbol regarded the whole affair as something provincial which preeminently concerned his countrymen. He considered the conclusion justified that a formula of faith which placed the death of Jesus Christ under Pontius Pilate could not have arisen first after the spread of Christianity in the Roman Empire, but in a

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period "when the horizon of those who made the *Credo* was still limited by the Judæan highlands." To be sure, we may not regard as justified the inference that this applies to the entire formula; but for the christological part, therefore, for the second article, it seems to be too conclusive that it originated in the original congregation. This is not our only basis, but it is a welcome confirmation of the results already gained.

We may, however, go further. Not that we retract what precedes and intend to say that the trinitarian symbol was originally used so early at the baptism of Israelites. The early insertion of Acts 8: 37, already in existence in the second century, shows that for the believers in the Old Covenant a confession of Jesus Christ only was necessary. But the symbol could have been formulated for use in the mission to the heathen, which Paul was not the first to institute (cf. Acts 10), and by the primitive apostolic circle. Every one of its single members speaks for the

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early apostolic congregation, nothing demands later creation.

The last difficulty falls away from this derivation of the whole, if the so-called baptismal command is genuine, if, as Matthew, without recognizable "tendency," reports, Jesus really said of baptism, through which one became a disciple, that it was to be administered "into" (Greek *eis*) the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28: 19). For so it is to be translated, and not "in" (contrary to the Vulgate and Luther)—that would be "to the charge of" or "for." The formula must have arisen upon Israelitic-Jewish territory, and is to be explained from that standpoint. Without good foundation are the new attempts to derive it, especially as found in Paul, from the profane Greek of that time (Deissmann, Heitmüller). For one could show in that case in the formula "into the name" only a commercial usage, where the name signified only the account entered in the name (of

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the person) concerned, from which something was taken or to which something was transferred. With the word "immerse" the phrase "into the name" could not possibly have this sense. For it must be granted in general, even by Heitmüller, that in many passages in Matthew's gospel the "into the name" must be explained by reference to an Aramaic basis—*leschem* or *leschum*. Would it not, therefore, grammatically, be more correct so to explain also Matt. 28:19, especially when thus a more satisfactory meaning is gained than "to the account of"? Nearest in significance to the baptismal formula stands Matt. 18:20: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." This gathering together takes place under no other circumstance than that which has regard to the name Jesus, which is what brings those men together and binds them together. At the same time, it is significant in this passage that the name does not

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stand in distinction from the person named, as we Westerners might easily understand it; according to the Semites the name designates the person by means of the quality connoted in the name. We should more nearly get the original sense if we were to omit the word "name" and read the passage: "where two or three are gathered together with regard to me" (or "with reference to me"). The Talmud provides a useful application of the formula when it says: "A Samaritan may not circumcise a Jew, since the Samaritan circumcises into the name of Mount Gerizim."* Gerizim was for them the sanctuary of God in distinction from Mount Zion (cf. John 4:20). Both Jews and Samaritans admit to religious fellowship through circumcision: but Samaritan circumcision is performed with regard to Mount Gerizim. The difference between this

**Aboda zara* (Babylonian), fol. 27a. My colleagues Procksch and Alt, dealing with the Old Testament, understand that "name"—"God." The relationship with the passages in the gospels then stands.

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passage and Matt. 18:20 lies in this: in the assembling with regard for Jesus the relationship of all to him is already assumed, while in the circumcising the relationship to Gerizim is instituted. But this distinction lies not in the formula, but in the subject or in the verb. From the foregoing the baptismal formula is easily intelligible. Baptism or immersion takes place with regard to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is highly significant that the three are embraced under one "name," and that, on the other side, the "Father" has not the adjunct "God." Yet there can be but one divine relationship intended: the name of Father, Son, and Spirit can not well be otherwise understood than as the designation of the manifest God, with regard to whom Christian baptism takes place. But because the subject deals with an act of consecration like circumcision (cf. Col. 2:11), it results that the relationship to Father, Son, and Spirit is not already assumed, but is (at baptism) instituted. We have,

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then, to translate in the simplest way: "Make all peoples (heathen) my disciples, while ye baptize them into (unto) the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (the single article corresponds to the single occurrence of "name").

In this Jesus, perhaps, as little created a merely liturgical formula, which the administrant was to utter over the candidate, as the Talmud intended to say that a Samaritan spoke over the one to be circumcised the words: "Into the name of Mount Gerizim." For Paul also shows that this is not the meaning of the formula. He knew of baptism as taking place "into some one's name" when he wrote against the partizans in Corinth: "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" Now it is very clear that over no candidate was the formula uttered: "I baptize thee into the name of Paul." But Paul does not stop there, he continues: "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say

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that I had baptized in mine own name" (1 Cor. 1: 13ff.). Therefore, Paul would have regarded it as a baptism into his own name if he had reserved baptism to himself as a privilege, without any change having been made in the complete ritual. Consequently, baptism into any one's name involves that the baptized is set in a really personal relation to the person named. This may come about in a variety of ways. It may be expressed just as well by means of a confession, corresponding to the formula, required of the candidate, as through the utterance of the formula itself. The passage in Matt. 28: 19 gives for neither (confession nor utterance) an absolutely binding mold, and this is one reason more for allowing its unassailable genuineness. If we add to this the facts that for the trinitarian confession and the triple immersion connected with it the ultimate foundation was always found in the express words of the Lord, and that the unison of the early Church on this matter is from that

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point of view most easily explained, the concession must be made that no historical objections of any weight can lie against the genuineness of the words of Matt. 28:19, while many historical circumstances speak in favor of them. Disagreement follows eventually on dogmatic grounds, and must so follow, where one does not reckon with a real resurrection of Jesus as a fact.* But for those who are from internal necessity compelled to recognize such an event, confidence in the truth of the historical tradition will be still further strengthened by the circumstance of allowing as actual the first utterance of that word by the risen Jesus.

If, then, we may count upon the trinitarian baptismal command as spoken by the Lord and, consequently, as already in the possession of the primitive apostolic congregation, there is nothing

*Concerning baptism in Christ's name cf. p. 115 above; also *Glaubensregel*, p. 392, remark 1; and E. Riggenbach, *Der trinitarische Taufbefehl*, 1903.

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in the way of regarding the symbol as a whole as pre-Pauline, to which conclusion we have been led by reasoning upon other premises. We may go back to the primitive apostolic congregation, not merely with the central christological part, but also with the trinitarian draft. Only we may not picture the rise of the symbol as taking place after the analogy furnished by the Nicene Council; just as little is it to be regarded as the work of some one individual; nor may it be conceived as the legalistic codification of a formula. But alongside of its original and long existent variety and mobility we may not, as we have already seen, overlook the likeness of the basis, which reached as far as the formal shape which it took, without which the original relationship of the later (developed) formulas and the consciousness of unity in the confession remain unexplained. With this is gained the immediate historical assurance regarding the early ecclesiastical baptismal confession, and, therefore, of ours

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which is only a branch, by which we are entitled to speak of it as the apostolic symbol. Indeed, it may be called original-apostolic from its origin, and universal-apostolic from its value (1 Cor. 15).

On the other hand, it must be emphatically stated that we never meet the representation or are led to the hypothesis that the Apostles' Creed is derived from the Lord Christ himself. This supposition of the Dane Grundtvig (1872) must be regarded as essentially unhistorical. Also, where in a later age (than the apostolic) it seems to have been conceived (so Tertullian, *De præscr.* 20ff., 37) that the rule of faith and with it the trinitarian symbol was to be traced to Jesus Christ, the reference is doubtless to Matt. 28:19. In general, all witnesses agree with the leader Irenæus in saying that the Church received its confession from the apostles (and their disciples, cf. Irenæus, *Adv. hæer.* I. x. 1; II. ix. 1). Yet Paul, who says of the words regarding the

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Lord's Supper that he received them "from the Lord" (1 Cor. 11: 23), makes no such claim for the confessional formula to which he refers in 1 Cor. 15: 1ff.; on the contrary, he connects himself with the chain of believers who received it and transmitted it to others.

In addition to the historical reasons, on account of which we reject the idea of Grundtvig, there are others arising from the subject matter. It seems to us opposed to the sense of the gospel to assert that Jesus prescribed a confession of faith in legalistic fashion. It would be doubly inconceivable if he had in that case prescribed it, not in some such form as "Thou shalt believe," but in the form "I believe." We are strongly convinced that the trinitarian formula upon which the symbol rests is not simply an agreeable expression for the New Testament revelation of God, but, conformably to Matt. 28:19, proceeded from Jesus himself. The confession based upon this was not mechanically prescribed, but was

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spiritually evoked and came spontaneously from his Church as a joyous echo and a blessed answer.

This brings us to the material comparison of the Apostles' Creed with the New Testament, by which our historical results must be tested.

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X

Relation as to Contents of the Apostles' Creed and the New Testament

IN the discussion of the Apostles' Creed, with respect to its matter, we proceed in such a way that we do not in the first place take our formula in itself and with its particulars, but in its unison with the totality of early ecclesiastical baptismal confessions—as it is typically set forth in R (p. 39 above) and in the Creed of Antioch (p. 44 above). Once more, we shall not investigate, as has been customary, the individual members in their relations to the New Testament, but first and foremost the symbol as a whole. And this brings us to a third methodic principle, that we consider the symbol purely in itself and seek to comprehend it in its most peculiar genius before we place it in comparison with the New Testament.

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If we proceed in this way, at once the first words of the Apostles' Creed strike us as significant—"I believe." If one is not to see therein a refinement without parallel, he must recognize that a confession so introduced was not originally thought out as a doctrinal enactment and yoke for faith. Luther's catechism, in which the Creed follows the decalog, reveals significantly the difference between "Thou shalt"—which strenuously imposes demands—and "I believe"—by which one gives utterance to religious convictions which exist and are his own. How altogether different from this is the later Athanasian confession, which was formulated in the already half-Catholic Church, since it begins: "Every one who would be saved must hold fast before all the Catholic faith." This sounds like a threat; the Apostles' Creed, like a psalm of joy. That it is not considered a whip for evil heretics, nor yet a polemic, is shown by the fact that a little further along Jesus is spoken of as "Our

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Lord." So is he called by Christians, his believers and redeemed slaves. To be sure the Eastern formulas have in part only "on (a) Lord Jesus Christ"; but they show that the confession was thought out and wrought out from the standpoint of the Christian congregation by inserting in connection with mention of the deeds of Christ "for us" (Antioch) or "for our salvation" (Eusebius, N). Even the apparently inconsequent collocation of "I" and "We" is significant.* The one thing is that he who utters the confession as setting forth his faith does not hide behind the faith of others; again, he does not make confession without feeling himself a member of the congregation, and that, too, in its relation to Christ. The interweaving of the personal and the communal as it exists in our Christian faith could not have a more beautiful expression. Finally, especially worthy of notice is it that every-

*Later the Eastern Creeds often have "We believe"—possibly resulting from N, where this form was authorized as by the symbol of a synod.

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where in the older forms there is but a single "I believe" to introduce and bind together the entire confession. It is not, as in our symbol, repeated before the third article. By this means the unity of the entire Creed as to content is set forth.

Before we proceed to a closer examination of this content, we must meet the objection of Harnack that the symbol, precisely as a confession of faith, is already "Catholic" in character. Harnack intimates in his *Dogmengeschichte* that the institution of such a confession of faith as the Apostles' Creed sprang into existence from a notable turning of the Church from the ethical to the dogmatic. This is incapable of proof. For so far as the baptismal confession can be traced backward directly, it is always connected with the renunciation, *i.e.*, with moral obligation. In that case there could have been no supersession or displacement of the ethical. Whether original Christianity was only or first of all a new moral-

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ity and not rather a new faith is to be determined in the first place from the New Testament.

We pass now to consideration of the content as a whole. If this is, as already remarked, welded into a unity through the one dominating phrase "I believe," it is, on the other hand, unmistakably divided into three parts by the addition "and in," occurring twice—before "Jesus Christ" and "the Holy Spirit." Catholic usage of an early date divided the symbol into twelve parts corresponding to the number of the apostles. When Luther again divided the Apostles' Creed into three articles, he restored the old foundation. The symbol, even without reference to the passage Matt. 28:19, reveals itself to be trinitarian. In view of the (mention of the) Holy Spirit, to which the second "and on" attaches itself, this is unmistakable. The Holy Spirit is parallel with God the Father and Jesus Christ. But still the construction "believe in" is important for the sense of this combination and

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of the single article (or of the three). It is on the one side an un-Hellenic construction, first met in the New Testament; on the other side it is applied essentially in personal connection.* Consequently, not several individuated doctrines (as would follow from the Catholic division) but personalities are the objects of faith. If this is true for the first and the second articles, one can not forbear taking the third article in the same way. At any rate, about 150 A. D., Justin Martyr so understood it when he wrote in defense of the Christians against the charge of godlessness: "We revere the Creator of this universe, then in the second place Jesus Christ the Son of the true God, and in the third place the prophetic Spirit" (*Apol.* i. 13). Granted that the concept "God" stands beside "the Father" of the first article only, since Christ is called his Son, and indeed his only begotten, the confession signifies that its "I believe" is intended to bring into

*Cf. Cremer's and Preuschen's lexicons.

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expression exactly the Christian faith in God, since it makes the phrase cover Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

From this point of view the individual articles come into clear light. The first article brings to utterance no doctrinal statement respecting creation, for in general in the early forms creation is not mentioned at all. Unfortunately, an important conception of the original form has been weakened in the translation of the Greek text into Latin and from that into German [and English]. The original shape of the first article was: "I believe in God the Father All-ruling" (Greek, *Pantokratora*). The corresponding Greek means much more than "almighty." This suggests only possible power—he can do all if he will; the other means actual and exercised power of lordship—he rules over all. At first it was not found necessary to characterize God as Creator; again, nothing material was added to the original confessions when it was said that the All-ruler of

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this world had also created it. For the second article it is important to note its original unity in the matter of person. The birth of Christ, his death, his resurrection, and so forth, do not form so many articles of faith, as in the Catholic catechisms; the confession goes at once to the mention of Jesus Christ, God's Son, our Lord, and all the rest was added originally in participial form as characteristics (apart from the last member). As now in the first article the Father's active world-relationship was stated alongside of his personal designation, so is it here with Jesus Christ. Therein R exhibits a certain shading as compared with our T, both in the Greek and in the Latin text, in resuming again the article or the relative pronoun before "suffered," separating the member which deals with the birth from all that follows and binding these again into unity. Thus the birth appears as the fundamental fact upon which Christ's historical reality rests. From the foregoing we seem to be under

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the necessity of construing the third article in the same way and to think of holy Church, forgiveness of sins, resurrection, life everlasting as in some way the activity of the Holy Spirit. At any rate, it is not suitable to construe the Creed as though simple collocation in the third article placed the Holy Spirit among the (impersonal) benefits of salvation.* Opposed to such a construction, as already shown, is the new beginning indicated by "And on."

While we are comprehending the symbol as a whole, we have to take account of the question whether as such it agrees with the New Testament. And this question does not require us to say whether each of its statements is somehow conformable, but rather whether the New Testament itself conducts to such a confession. For this comparison the New Testament as a whole is to be brought into comparison. The New

*So Harnack in his answer to Cremer's polemical writing, *Zum Kampf um das Apostolikum*, 1892, p. 10.

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Testament is, at least in its earliest form, the written account of the apostolic preaching at work founding churches. So that now the proofs advanced in our historical investigation are material proofs that the Apostles' Creed and the New Testament are in accord. As on the one side scarcely a member stands in the Creed which is not in its form of expression comparable with a New Testament saying, so, on the other hand, we could hardly better accomplish the task of formulating in brief the common apostolic faith as found in the New Testament than by means of the Creed, nor could we well state it otherwise. This is true at least for the greater part of the New Testament, namely, for Acts, the Pauline, Petrine, and Johannine writings, together with Hebrews, and also for the synoptic gospels in their present form. It is fairly characteristic of our confession, and distinguishes it from all later ones, that it originally contained no sort of new dogmatic formulas, but

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only plain Scriptural expressions. This proves that its creation was not due to heresy nor to internal dissension in the Church, but that that Church was opposing itself as a unity, by means of the confession as with the New Testament, to Judaism and heathenism. So that Luther was entirely right when he wrote in his Larger Catechism: "So that this article of the faith separates and sunders us Christians from all other people on earth."

If now, in spite of what has been said, one brings as a charge against the Creed that much of it is "Catholic," especially the central position of the faith, particularly of the faith in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so also the circumstance that the confession singles out as the chief points not the historical life of Christ on earth, but his death and resurrection—these reproaches are really directed against the New Testament, above all against the Apostle Paul. These points make no less against the synoptists than against us.

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For the one gospel of Matthew alone shows the symbol to be Scriptural. Particularly, the gospel narrative of the synoptists furthers recognition of the fact that for them the acme of their message and the center of their performance are found in the story of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. So that such objections, when laid against the Apostles' Creed, are in reality urged against the New Testament. The fact may be exprest in this way: Whoever would do away with the Apostles' Creed on the ground that it is Catholic would cast away our New Testament for the same reason. Fairness and honesty, therefore, demand that the battle against the Creed be allowed to lapse and war upon the New Testament be declared. To be sure, fundamentally this war has already opened, above all as a fight against Paul (and John). But modern liberalism must speak out in a more open manner the fact that it regards as "the New Testament canon" in essence only a few bits of history and

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some of the sayings of Jesus taken from the New Testament, and these dealing only with matters preceding his death. It is concerned only with the normal religious personality of the man Jesus. That from this standpoint one should arrive at the discarding of the Apostles' Creed is easily understood. Nevertheless, it is not permissible to assume the position that this takes place in accord with evangelical principles and on the basis of Scripture or the New Testament; with the Apostles' Creed—or rather before it—one casts away the New Testament. On the other hand, this determination will make clear to all who hold fast to the New Testament that with it the Apostles' Creed as a whole stands and does not perish.

From this point we proceed to a brief examination of the individual members of the Creed. The "Almighty" of the first article goes back directly to the Old Testament in the Greek translation; we discover it in the New Testament only in pas-

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sages colored by the Old Testament or in direct citations (2 Cor. 6: 18, and often in the Revelation of John). It is incontestable that the addition "Creator of heaven and earth," not yet found in R, corresponds materially to the New Testament (cf. Acts 17:24).

At the beginning of the second article the order (found in R) "in Christ Jesus" (instead of the practically universal "Jesus Christ") brings out the predicative sense of Christ (=Messiah) and, consequently, its original definition for believing Israelites or those who were in process of conversion. It signifies "in the Messiah-Jesus." On the other hand, from the time when converts were first made from the heathen until our time the combination "Jesus Christ" forms one idea, while his dignities were designated by the two further terms given in the symbol. A backward glance to the first article is given when Jesus is called the Son of the Father there named, and "the Father" sums up the relationship to

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Jesus as the nearest to him. The symbol, moreover, adds to this and emphasizes (in the Greek with the article prefix) that he is the only begotten.*

If by the first predicate the Godward relationship of Jesus is exprest, the second expresses his relationship to believers in him; he is—not a Lord, but—the Lord. This also is the common faith of the New Testament. The statement that Jesus is the Lord appears to have been in the very primitive confession (1 Cor. 8:6; Phil. 2:11; cf. John 13:13); and in corresponding fashion believers in him are his bondservants for life or death, for labor and hope, for time and eternity. Directly to this is attached the saying respecting the birth, which in T reads “Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of Mary the Virgin,” and this appears already in the old form of R, except that it reads, without any material difference, “Born

*For the term cf. John 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9, also John 1:14, 18; Heb. 11:17.

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of the Holy Spirit and Mary the Virgin." It is evident that the gospels of Matthew and Luke testify to this expression, and that one must reject from the New Testament what he objects to in the symbol. If one alleges, however, that testimony to the miracle of the birth of Christ is given in the New Testament in "only" two passages, he must remember that from that source he can bring no contrary testimony. Furthermore, no passage can be adduced which requires the mention of this miracle, and sufficient emphasis has not been laid upon the fact that the two evangelists drew the story of the birth from different sources, and they are the two who give the family tree of Jesus leading up to Joseph. As in the case of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, so here reference is made to the treatises on the subject.* To the objection that the historical deeds of Christ are passed over, the answer is

*Grützmacher, *Die Jungfrauengeburt*, 2d ed., 1911; E. Riggensbach, *Die Auferstehung Jesu*, 2d ed., 1908.

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ready that in cases where the rule of faith is expanded, mention of these is often interjected. Tertullian (*De præscr. hæc.*, 13) inserts between mention of the birth and the crucifixion: "Jesus preached the new law and the promise of the kingdom of heaven, and performed miracles." But in the brevity of the symbol this is passed over while only the birth, death, and exaltation are stressed; from which it appears that the last was the point of emphasis. But in the New Testament, inclusive of the gospels, that is exactly what is found.

There is no necessity to bring special proof of accord with Scripture in the case of all the attributes. The "sitteth at the right hand of God" goes directly back to the testimony of Christ himself, and links on to Ps. 110:1 (Mark 12:36 and 14:62). If the attempt be made to show a difference between the symbol and the New Testament in respect to the ascent into heaven, it is not enough to show that the first three gospels

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do not give the account. For if according to the best attested reading Luke 24:51 gives only "He was parted from them," the same author in Acts 1:9-10 tells of the ascent and could but have had it in mind in the gospel. Besides this, in the very old addition to Mark (16:19), not indeed derived from Mark, yet probably going back to Aristion, the ascent is mentioned; it is in view in John 6:64 and 20:17; in 1 Pet. 3:22 it is directly referred to; and, finally, it is generally assumed in all those passages which refer to the return of Christ from heaven, (*e.g.*, 1 Thess. 1:10). This brings us to the last member of the second article. From what immediately precedes, it is clear that the "from thence" refers not (as Kattenbusch supposes) to the "right hand of God," but to "heaven"; for assuredly he who sits at the right hand of God will come from heaven. If now the purpose of his coming again is given only as "to judge the quick and the dead," this seems to be the one

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passage which does not reach the fulness of the New Testament faith. And yet, as we have seen, this member had reached formulation in the apostolic age. It does not bring out fully the hope of the completion of the kingdom and of salvation, consequently, the coming again of the Lord appears in the symbol as the opposite only of the fear, not also of the blessed expectation to which Jesus himself had conducted his own.* Very early, indeed, it may have come about that the dangers of a fanatical enthusiasm, which connected itself with the hope of the end of things, led to a strong emphasis upon the judgment. But as evangelical Christians, unprejudiced by this fact, we must illustrate this passage in the symbol by the New Testament in much the same way as did Luther, who wrote in his Larger Catechism: "He is, therefore, risen again, death being swallowed up in victory, and has received

*Luke 21:28; cf. 1 Thess. 1:10 and Phil. 4:4ff., where "The Lord is at hand" refers to the second coming.

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dominion at the right hand of the Father, so that the devil and all powers must be subjected to him and lie beneath his feet, until he shall finally at the last day separate and sunder us from the evil world, the devil, death, sin," etc.

So far as concerns the third article, its Scriptural basis is already made sure by the investigation respecting the trinitarian formula.* The very formulation and arrangement of the other members suffice to show that they serve to express nothing else than the faith witnessed in the New Testament. Next to the Holy Spirit stands the Church, doubtless understood as a unity. A better commentary to this juxtaposition than the history of Pentecost it would be impossible to furnish. In the earliest formulas the only adjective qualifying "Church" is "holy." And this, once more, corresponds wholly to the New Testament insofar as that there the believers are called saints (cf. Eph. 5:26). This word "holy"

*Cf. further Kropatscheck's *Die Trinität*, 1910.

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seems to suggest the conscious and purposed uniting of the Holy Spirit with the holy congregation. With this is connected the forgiveness of sins. From the point of view of the following member, it appears as the benefit of salvation that is enjoyed in this life in part; viewed from the preceding member, it is mediated through the holy Church. In both relationships it repeats the sense of the New Testament. This is no less the case when it mentions at the end the resurrection, and that as involving the body, and also (to be sure not in R, tho it is present in other early formulas) life everlasting as included in our faith. It ought to be taken into consideration that the added statement "resurrection of the flesh" does not quite correspond to the New Testament form of expression. For that reason Luther criticized it in his Larger Catechism, and remarked: "In good German fashion we might read 'resurrection of the body' or 'of the corpse,' still (he added) lay no great weight

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thereon, if only the words are rightly understood." The opposition which is directed against this member of the symbol from the rationalistic doctrinal teaching concerning immortality impugns also the New Testament.

Finally, we must examine from the grammatical points of view the members of the third article. According to the relation of the symbol to the trinitarian formula and to the meaning of "I believe in," no doubt is raised that only the Holy Spirit is immediately designated as the object of belief. On the other hand one can not construe a distinction in the grammatical construction (originally observed) so as to follow that method shown in most emphatic form in the symbol of Aquileia, which rendered the "in" before "Father," "Son," and "Holy Ghost" by the ablative, and then put "Church" and the rest in the accusative (Rufinus, in Hahn, § 36). But the accusative is to be regarded as following in close but free connection with "I believe in the Holy

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Spirit," yet one is not so to consider it as tho he were to say "I believe in the Church" in the same sense as "I believe in God or in the Holy Spirit."

By the preceding it seems to have been shown that the Apostolicum is in accord with Scripture as a whole and in its individual members. We have only to consider the peculiarities which our symbol T contains, together with a small number of others. Perhaps, indeed, they are the things which revolt the opponents of the Apostolicum! They are three in number: in the second article the descent into hell; and in the third, the adjective "catholic" before "Church" and the addition "Communion of the saints." Stress must be laid on the fact that two of these peculiarities have caused absolutely no offense in our popular German Luther-text. Luther did translate "catholic" by "Christian," and not without precedent in the Middle Ages. In general, the adjective, when it came into the symbol, designated the Church in opposition to the heretical com-

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munities, and that since about 180 A. D. But in itself the word connotes no more than "one world-embracing Church," and in this sense it contradicts neither the New Testament nor the evangelical conception of the Church. The phrase in opposition to "Church" which is usually translated "Communion of saints" (so in the Roman Catholic and the Heidelberg Catechisms) Luther purposely rendered otherwise, *viz.*, "Congregation of the saints." In this Larger Catechism he explains it thus: "It is only a gloss or interpretation by which to show what the Christian Church is—a congregation in which there are only the saints, or, still clearer, a holy congregation."

So now it is evident that the phrase describes only the same New Testament conception of the Church as is signified by the adjective "holy" before "Church." But altho the word "communion" originally had not a concrete but an abstract sense—communion or fellowship with the saints—yet a meaning very close to that of Luther's was

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given by that very early expounder of the Creed, Nicetas of Remesiana in Dacia (about 400 A. D.), who had it in his symbol. He writes:

“According to the confession of the blessed Trinity thou confessest now that thou believest in one holy Catholic Church. And what else is the Church but the congregation of the saints? For from the beginning of the world the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and other righteous persons, wherever they were, are, or shall be, form one Church, inasmuch as they, sanctified by one faith and conduct and marked by one spirit, have become one body, and Christ is the head of this body. I may go still further. Even the angels and the higher dominions and powers are united in one Church in accord with apostolic teaching (Col. 1:20). Therefore, thou believest that thou, in this one Church, shalt attain to the communion of the saints” (that is, through the baptism which was immediately to be administered to the candidates; *De symbolo* 10).

Consequently, there is nothing discoverable here which is either materially or historically un-

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biblical. Hence there remains now only the descent into hell. Doubtless there is a difficulty here in the German [and English] text, in that "hell" signifies the place of the damned. But that is not the sense of the *descendit ad infera*, which affirms only that the Lord descended into Hades, the world of the dead. So far as the history of this member is concerned, one may remark that it came into the symbol in the fourth century, tho it did so without controversy. Frequent mention is made of the descent into hell by expounders of the creed who do not have it in their creed, such as Cyril of Jerusalem (348 A. D.) and Faustus of Riez (Hahn, § 61). Still earlier, however, was the matter discust, in the second century. In the fourth century the thought was generally disseminated that Christ had overcome death and set free the pious of the Old Testament. But it is clear that the last thought must have occupied an earlier generation of believers. In fact, we discover in Tertullian (*De*

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anima 54ff.), Irenæus (*Adv. haer.* V., xxxi. 1, IV., xxvii. 2), Justin Martyr (*Dial.* 72), Marcion (in Irenæus, I., xxvii. 3), and Ignatius (*Ad Magnes.* ix. 3) the same representation, that Christ carried into Hades after his death the tidings of salvation to the pious of the Old Testament. Indeed, Irenæus (cf. still further III., xx. 4) and even Justin know of an alleged Old Testament prediction referring to the matter—God, the Lord of Israel, remembered his dead who were asleep in the grave in the earth and descended to them to bring the joyous news of salvation. Justin charged the Jews with eliminating this passage from the Old Testament. It would appear as tho with that pseudo-prophecy we are conducted back to the very earliest Jewish-Christian congregation, the members of which must have had at heart especially the release of their faithful fathers and prophets. So that one is led to say that this member of the Creed must have set forth this thought series. The express

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sense conveyed by the wording itself is indeed much simpler. In all the formulas (except that of Sirmium; cf. Hahn, § 163) the "descended into hell" stands immediately by the side of "buried." This shows that the two members belong together, since the Israelitic-Jewish manner of thought places the dead body in the grave while the soul of the dead goes to Hades. Rufinus of Aquileia, the first in whose writings we find this member in a Creed, says in a way altogether in agreement with this: "The meaning of the word seems to have been the same as 'buried.' And in this last sense this clause agrees entirely with the world of thought of the New Testament. The sermon of Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2:26ff.) covers the subject. There Peter cites from the Davidic Psalm 16 the words: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (*i.e.*, in the grave). Since now David himself was dead, he must have spoken this as a prophet concerning

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the resurrection of Christ, who was neither left in Hades nor did his flesh see corruption. Here is, very significantly, the representation that Christ as a soul was in Hades while his body lay in the grave (cf. Eph. 4:9). If this is so, in general a double result follows: (1) the translation "descended into hell" is really objectionable; (2) no independent central redemptive significance can be claimed for it. As to the first matter we would welcome some more literal rendering such as "descended into the underworld." But should the entire Apostolicum be rejected on account of the sentence if it were phrased in some such way as that here suggested? Is it a fact, as is sometimes asserted, that the descent into hell is a decisive reason for refusing the entire Apostolicum? Since the member in its fundamental reading is entirely Scriptural, it ought not to be too difficult to give the rendering the necessary turn. Then the descent into Hades can never furnish good reasons for rejecting the Creed as unscriptural.

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In short, we may rather say that the Apostolicum even in its separate clauses is in material agreement with the New Testament, and that also the peculiarities of our later formulas have nothing that conflict with it. There is here confirmation of this fact—the Apostolicum is supported by the New Testament and can not be opposed on grounds found within it.

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XI

Our Attitude Toward the Apostles' Creed

AND, now, a last word respecting our attitude toward the Apostles' Creed. And, first of all, why and with what right do we adhere to our formula, received as it was from the Middle Ages? Not because we regard the text as inviolable. And that was the way that Luther felt about it. Nor do we trust to the fact that just this symbol has overcome and eliminated in the West all variant forms, without further interpreting the facts to mean that God intended to give us exactly this form of the Apostolicum, or that he definitely purposed the insertion of the "Catholic" and the "descent into hell" in the Christian primitive confession. For who knows the mind of the Lord or who is his councillor? Not the primitive R, but a relatively late form

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of the early ecclesiastical baptismal confession, like our T, has attained to continuing esteem in at least the Western Church. We might, from a religious point of view, interpret this to mean that God intended to meet every unevangelical over-valuation of the symbol, because this might more easily have attached itself to that earlier formula. If we, therefore, still adhere to our T, it is because the historical connection, especially with the Church catholic, and its joyous concord as a whole richly compensate us for fortuitous little defects. On the other hand, elimination of the descent to hell would involve an altogether unjustified over-valuation of this member. Nor would the modern opponents of the Apostolicum be satisfied with a return to the early form R. The fact most objectionable to them lies even in that early Creed, and it is not the particular clauses, but the Creed as an entirety which calls forth their hostility and battle fervor.

Here lies the fact that may not be concealed,

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that to-day there are ecclesiastical circles of large extent which do not hold the Apostolicum at the high value which we have observed in Luther. The two causes of this seem to me to lie in our modern Christianity. The first of these is that we live too much in the subjective, we deal so entirely with inner experiences and emotions. Not seldom the capacity has been lost for observing the great objective fact of divine revelation. As a result we certainly and necessarily dwarf our subjective life. For there must be something objective which we experience, and in the religious life that something is God. If God be no longer regarded as the sun that passes over us, but rather as the inner light that lives in the eye as the nerve of sight, we shall no longer be plunged into darkness. The richness of our life is conditioned by a receptive surrender to the realities that are outside us. And in the religious sphere the Apostolicum may serve as a vast quarry of materials.

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A second cause of the opposition to the Creed is that we regard Christianity more as a morality than as a real religion—as something that we must do and not something that we receive from God. The noble Hamann was right when he said :

“Not in services, offerings, and vows that God asks of us lies the secret of Christian and divine blessedness, but rather in the promises, fulfilments and sacrifices that God makes and performs to the best of men; not in the chiefest and greatest command that he imposes, but in the highest good which he bestows; not in the legislation and teaching concerning morals which have to do with human dispositions and deeds, but in the bringing to accomplishment of divine deeds, works, and institutions for the salvation of the whole world” (*Werke*, vii. 56).

If we understand Christianity in this way, we shall rightly comprehend the Apostles' Creed. And then “Crucified under Pontius Pilate” together with the clause “the Forgiveness of sins,” the “Arose on the third day” together with

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"Resurrection of the flesh, and the Life everlasting" will prove such a blessed illumination as to precipitate in us so fine a faith that we shall not need to search for a new morality, but through it shall become new men. And withal Jesus Christ, instead of being the human founder of a new religiousness will prove to us the mediator and conveyor of divine love and grace such as the Creed point out for us. Then, finally, will the Creed itself become a means of avoiding the one-sidedness of modern Christianity and so renew the proof of its essential worth. So will it overcome all those who are its enemies.

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Apostles' creed and the
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